Metaphysical Philosophy

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Metaphysical Holistic Life Coaching by Saiyra Akbar

"It is through gratitude for the present moment that the spiritual dimension of life opens." Eckhart Tolle "The final solution to all human problems-and the only source of real fulfillment-is within us. Try as we may satisfy our need for personal freedom and soul contentment by external means alone, success will ever be elusive. At our innermost level of Being, the real Self of us exists in wholesome purity. Here, untouched by mundane conditions and transitory events, abides undisturbed peace, pure bliss, flawless knowledge, and limitless awareness of absolute freedom." Roy Eugene Davis, A Master Guide to Meditation & Spiritual Growth

The Aim of Holistic Life Coaching If you want your outside world to change, you must first change your inside world. One cannot work on outside problems until the inside problems are resolved. The goal of Holistic Life Coaching is to bring one's self-acceptance, self-responsibility, respect for free will into a healthy and harmonious balance so that one is confident to face their outer issues. Many of our issues will be resolved once we are equipped to do so. The Holistic Life Coaching Model can be used for all problems and goals because they all start with a thought, followed by a belief filtered through past experiences, followed by emotion/action. Since this normal human process involves consciousness, a problem is also spiritual in nature to a greater or lesser extent. Therefore, it could be argued that all problems have their roots in a person's spiritual nature.

Many people experience blocks due to disabling beliefs, which are anchored in our belief system. These disabling thoughts are from an imbalance in self-esteem, self-responsibility, and misuse of free will concepts. Thus, most problems that we experience have their roots in our inner spiritual nature. Having said this, some problems fall into the realm of spiritual crises. A spiritual crisis is an existential crisis; that is, an issue that directly causes a person to question themselves and his or her beliefs concerning their existence within the framework of his or her universal worldview. That is basically saying that a spiritual crisis can result when something happens that threatens a person's perception of reality. People can have spiritual crises in several different areas, the most common of which is becoming disillusioned with their religious faith and/or upbringing, or the veracity of a sacred book, or the existence of God. Another example might be a skeptic coming face-to-face with evidence of extraterrestrial life.

Other areas that can lead to spiritual crises include one losing all hope, a long-lasting relationship such as a marriage ending, living in a seriously

dysfunctional home, being fired after decades on the job, alcoholism or addiction, serious financial problems, deep depression, disclosing something about yourself such as sexual orientation to a family or society that scorns such things, and others. In our modern times, with an influx of knowledge coming from various belief systems may lead one to questioning his or her existence, religious beliefs, core values etc., if thinking along these lines continue long enough, a spiritual crisis ensues. For example, not getting a promotion at work one time will likely not result in a spiritual crisis; however, being repeatedly denied a promotion over several years and attempts may cause the person to question themselves and their existence, hence, leading to a spiritual crisis. The aim of Holistic Life Coaching targets the spiritual imbalance and work toward bringing the imbalance back into balance. This is done by re-enforcing the clients' self-esteem, recognizing their good work, and achievements, moving them towards projects and people where they will not be deprived or denied. It is human nature and a human need to be recognized and to be needed, to have a purpose, to know that their efforts and life mean something.

The main objective is to do no harm and to do right. It means that we as a coach should to be sensitive and compassionate to the client's issues, struggles, and needs, and assisting them in their goals/objectives. The goal of the coach is to diminish the client's issue(s) down to its base cause; To find out what is holding the client back. The Holistic approach focuses on helping a client to get into a healthy state of being. Since adversity (and being blocked) is a state of disorder, the key approach with using Holistic Life Coaching is to help a client reclaim his or her power by restoring order and balance to his or her Life.

In my experience, the first and second most common blocks to a person's development are a lack of self-acceptance and respect for free will, respectively. The latter usually manifests in control issues, i.e., the client is trying to control something he or she either cannot or should not control; and/or the client lacks sufficient respect for his or her own free will in some way. Once order is restored to self-acceptance and respect for free will, self-responsibility usually falls into place. The individual strives to be whole (holistic) integrating his/hers' spiritual and physical nature. By incorporating the elements of the Holistic Spirituality Life Model for Healthy Living the individual will increase their spiritual, mental, and emotional intelligence and use the knowledge in a meaningful way. The Holistic Spirituality Life Model brings new insights and interpretations of how the client sees themselves individually and in relation to the world. It works to realign a person's spiritual, intellectual, and emotional aspects and brings them back into sync. It is about assessing one's core values as well as personal reinvention; letting go of the old thought patterns and replacing them with positive, enlightened concepts.

Lastly, it is about understanding that we always have a choice as to who we are and how we will act. Holistic Life Coaching involves having a flexible approach: listening, commenting, and at times, being direct. By being direct I do not mean being abusive, curt, or impolite as some therapeutic modalities can be. It means a more humanistic approach is required. A good coach knows how to direct the client

to his or her goals by asking the right questions at the right time by using assertiveness in a direct, honest, empathetic, and win-win way.

Important Aspects of Inner Transformation

The process of inner transformation is a gradual process and takes time to become a part of our innate nature, but as you gradually begin to focus on these important elements of change, you can eventually succeed. The elements are as follows:

Forgiveness: The concept of forgiveness is so profound that it can change our whole life. The forgiveness that I am talking about goes beyond the original concept of forgiveness. It is the concept that includes everything in our life down to the minisicule detail. Forgiveness is an important aspect of our inner map of transformation and soul development. Our inner world is reflected to our outer world. To make positive changes and heal our outer world, we need to heal and change our inner concepts and validations. Sometimes to create a new life for ourselves we need to let go of the old concepts that are holding us back, they can only be released if its karma is released. This can only happen when we learn to forgive graciously, and with sincerity, and when this has become a daily and comfortable habit, then the next truth can be put in action.

Respect: The second important element of Inner transformation is respect for all life and do no harm attitude, with do right. "All life deserves respect, dignity, and compassion." Anthony Douglas Williams, Inside the Divine Pattern Respect has many aspects to it, such as Self-Respect means giving value to oneself – Holding yourself with honor and dignity. This means doing / speaking your truths with honor and dignity, without degrading yourself. This concept also includes first and foremost to take care of yourself and your physical and emotional needs. When you are at peace with yourself, then you can give the best of yourself to others. If you cannot love and respect yourself first, how can you love and respect others. Furthermore, do not allow others to treat you badly, and with disrespect. This includes do not allow others' such as family members, spouse, friends, colleague, and others around you to take advantage of you. Here is where you need to set up healthy boundaries. Be courteous, friendly, helpful but to a limit. No one can be the martyr all the time. When you show respect for yourself, it will reflect in your outer demeanor and people will respect you. An important aspect of Self-Respect is to hold yourself worthy of being treated well, and that you deserve all the good things in life, just like anyone else. If someone treats you unfairly or talks to you in a demeaning way. It is your duty to tell them so, in a firm, assertive manner.

Respect for Others include simple things such as, respecting other's boundaries, by respecting others' rights to be themselves and you do not attempt to control or change them in word or action. You should not give unsolicited advice to other adults. You respect the human right of free-will, to run their own lives as they see fit, so long as it does not adversely affect the life of others. Respect others' opinions, and listen to them attentively, and letting them speak. For example, if you

are in a relationship with someone, it is important to maintain a healthy respectful nature between each other. Your partner should respect you and vice versa. All types of relationships should be based and built on Respect. This includes colleagues, family, parents, friends, neighbors, bosses etc. All relationships should be based on equal respect for each other.

"Let us develop respect for all living things. Let us try to replace violence and intolerance with understanding and compassion and love." Jane Goodall

Respect for the Environment includes not abusing the land, trees, oceans, and places around us.. Do not pollute the waters with toxic materials. Reduce your food waste, reduce the use of plastics. Recycle items that can be recycled. Reduce your geographic footprint. I know some of these things might be a hassle for some, but if everyone does their share, bit by bit we can make the world a better place for us and our future generations. Just by conscious awareness, and caring we create a synergy of transformation within us- this is doing no harm and doing right, which lead to the right living. In addition, Respect for all life in simpler terms also means do no harm to all and everything around you. That is the best we can do, and we strive to become perfect every day.

Accepting Yourself as You Are Right Now: Another important point that is essential for Inner Transformation is self-acceptance of ourselves and situations, so we can move on from our current state. Accept yourself unconditionally, you are perfect, you are divine. We are all created from the Divine Essence of God; therefore, we are all divine and perfect as we are and strive to become better every day. Remember to affirm acceptance by saying, "I accept myself just the way I am right here and right now, including any so-called faults of mine. I work on myself every day to be better than I was yesterday. I choose to feel good about myself, and who I am becoming every day. Always accept yourself without any conditions or compromise. You are all that you think and believe about yourself. Each one of us has many faults that we would like to improve. That is fine. Begin by accepting yourself as you are and then make the appropriate changes in your life.

To overcome low self-esteem and them-esteem issues learn to concentrate on yourself, your expectation and what you want. Instead of what others want from you. It is always good to help others, but not at your own expense. Some sacrifice is fine, but no one can be a martyr all the time, eventually it will (the deprivation) will get to you and become a problem (such as a shadow, sub-personality, etc.). Learn to love yourself, nourish, and give yourself what you need. You deserve the same good things as anyone else. Find a healthy balance between giving of yourself. Be free, self-sufficient in everything and not dependent on anyone else for anything.

Other points to build your self-esteem:

a. Do not compare yourself to others as this creates them-esteem & jealousy. Jealousy is a selfish act that destroys relationships and causes harm to others. When someone becomes jealous of someone, it is usually because they feel threatened, they will lose if they do not have what the other has. They feel deprived and feel that they must have what the other has or they will not survive. This causes them to

behave in a selfish, mean way. This is a classic case of them-esteem. The jealous person feels that they will gain the approval of others by having the thing that they are jealous of. If you are self-sufficient, you will know that you can get what you want by making your own efforts. If you have healthy self-esteem and high regard for yourself, which is based on internal expectations, and validations-you will never feel jealous.

b. Avoid negative self-talk and use positive words and affirmations every day to build your self-esteem.

c. Learn to take and give compliments.

d. Find something to be proud of each day. Pat yourself on the back for doing the right thing or doing something good.

e. Smile a lot, and remember common courtesies such as 'Thank You,' 'Your Welcome!' "Acceptance…is a simple recognition of the truth that this is the way things are in this moment." John Kirkwood, LesleyPyne.co.uk

Responsibility for Yourself & For Your Actions:

Accept responsibility for your actions, past, present, and future, learn the lesson and move on. This in no way means to accept unjust acts, or morally incorrect behaviors, it means if something bad has happened to you, then learn the lessons, resolve the problems in a healthy, logical way and move on. Being responsible for your actions is the foundation upon which your success in life exists. It is imperative to know that you are accountable for all your actions, and choices.

Everyone is responsible for themselves. Accept responsibility for our past by accepting and learning from the consequences of our past mistakes. This means that once we learn the lesson, we also take positive action to correct our past mistakes, and make amends if possible, and then move forward without guilt.

Another important aspect of self-responsibility is to not expect others to do for you which you can and should do for yourself. As a responsible individual do things for yourself, do not burden others unnecessarily. This also includes to not do for others, that which they could and should do for themselves. This does not mean, do not do things for other rather it means not to make others dependent on your help that they start taking advantage of you. Exp. You should not perform routine chores and tasks for someone who should and could do it themselves. Everybody needs to do their share.

Gratitude: Gratitude is a strong appreciation for a good action; it is a state of thankfulness and gratefulness. Fear, anger, bitterness, mistrust, hatred, envy, jealousy, these block our inner light that we are born with. We are all born believing, as we grow and experience life, our inner lights begin to dim, a disappointment, a hurt, begins to mark us. Evil takes the shape of all of life's ills such as sadness, grief, anger, pain, hatred, the desire for revenge, the harassment of others etc. That is when we forget to be grateful for what we still have. When we are in a state of gratitude, we overcome our inner fears, sadness, anger, and griefs, then we open

the doors to let the light in, becoming peaceful after a stormy day. Good can be attained through the action of forgiveness, and life's ills and the darkness of evil can be endured by acceptance. An example is, when we accept the loss of a loved one, or a tragedy, disappointments in life, and let it be. It has happened, mourn, and then accept the loss and move on, then all your anger and sadness will melt away and you will become peaceful once again.

"O God of the silent places, who hears our most secret thoughts and dost understand our hidden wants beyond our power to pray, do give each of us what we most deeply need." Earlyne Chaney

Visualization

Visualization is a technique that brings the imagination alive, as the senses move to create an inner reality. Visualization is the ability to create an image in the mind. Whatever we think we can see it in our minds. This skill can be used to build a happy inner world. The ability to relax and visualize is a tool that can be used in many different types of therapies. The purpose to use visualization as a tool of self-transformation is to heal our inner selves by changing our views, our perceptions of the world around us. By changing our inner landscape, we can also change our outer landscape.

The website https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visualization_(graphics), describes visualization as.

"Visualization is a technique for creating images, diagrams, or animations to communicate a message. Visualization through visual imagery has been an effective way to communicate both abstract and concrete ideas since the dawn of humanity. Examples from history include cave paintings, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Greek geometry, and Leonardo da Vinci's revolutionary methods of technical drawing for engineering and scientific purposes."

Visualization techniques teach us how to use our mind to achieve success and reach our goals by using our imagination. Using visualization on a regular basis helps to focus your mind on what you want. For example, one of the problems many people face when seeking to achieve a certain goal is that they lose focus, becoming distracted by the mundane tasks of everyday life. To attain a goal, one would need to visualize on a regular basis. You would set aside some definite time

each day, in a calm and serene environment. Then just sit or lie comfortably and focus your mind to achieve that goal.

To perfect a skill many athletes, use visualizations before a big game, they imagine and perfect all the moves in the mind through the act of visualization. Many martial artists imagine and visualize their moves in their mind as a daily practice routine.

The website https://www.meditationexpert.com/martial-arts/sports-visualization-techniques.html talks about how athletes use visualization to perfect their game,

"In sports psychology literature you will find that internal imagery, mental rehearsal, imagination practice or visualization are all synonyms for "the cognitive rehearsal of a task in the absence of overt physical movement." Basically, whenever we imagine ourselves performing an action in the absence of physical practice, we are using imagery, imagination, or visualization. Visualization, the ability to create pictures in your mind, is one of the most powerful tools that an athlete can use to help achieve their personal best. It is now so common that many sports psychology books offer entire instructional chapters on the effectiveness of various visualization techniques. Among other things, visualization efforts are commonly used by athletes to improve their performance at specific skills such as hitting a ball, skiing a hill, swimming a race, jumping an obstacle, or moving their body in a certain way. For athletes,

Visualization practice is a type of active mental rehearsal of how they want things to be. Using visualization as a training technique invariably results in much better athletic performances so elite athletes everywhere are now using it to gain a competitive edge. Legendary sports figures like Tiger Woods, Pele, Jack Nicklaus, Michael Jordan, Jerry West, Michael Phelps, and Muhammad Ali have all used visualization practice and mental imagery to improve their game because it indeed creates an advantage that adds an edge."

There are many ways to use visualization to improve ourselves. You can use them in your professional and personal life to achieve a project or goal you set out to do. Visualization can also be used in meditation to enhance the benefits of relaxation and to bring us to full realization of who we really are and what our purpose in life is. It can be performed lying down or sitting in an upright position. This can mean we can help ourselves to feel better when we are tired, and depleted, or in stressful situation it can create a calm and relaxed state. Shakti Gawain says in her book, "Creative Visualization," that, "Creative visualization is the technique of using your imagination to create what you want in your life."

Gawain goes on to explain that imagination is the ability to create an idea, a mental picture, or a feeling sense of something. In creative visualization you use your imagination to create a clear image of what you wish to manifest. Then you continue to focus on the idea, the image regularly until it becomes reality. In "Creative Visualization", Shakti Gawain says,

"Your goal maybe on any level-physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual. You might imagine yourself with a new home, or with a new job, or having a satisfying relationship, or feeling calm and serene, or perhaps with an improved memory and learning ability. Or you might picture yourself handling a difficult situation effortlessly, or simply see yourself as a radiant being, filled with light and love. You can work on any level, and all will have results..."

Another important aspect of visualization is stilling the mind so you can create the visualization. This might be a difficult task to accomplish, but with diligent practice it can be done. Shakti Gawain says in the same book that anyone who has practiced meditation knows how difficult it can be to quite the mind, the inner "mind talk." To connect with our deeper, intuitive self we need to still the mind. One traditional meditation practice involves observing the inner dialogue as objectively as possible. Gawain says that this can be a valuable experience as it allows you to become consciously aware of the content of your thoughts. Many of these thoughts are like tape recordings of old patterns we have had all our life. In "Creative Visualizations," she says, "They are old "programming" we picked up long ago, which is still influencing what's happening to us today. For example, we might find that we habitually think self-defeating thoughts such as, "I'm not going to be able to do this," or "This is never going to work out right." The practice of engaging in affirmations allows us to begin replacing some of our state, worn out, or negative mind chatter with more positive ideas and concepts. It is a powerful technique one which can in a short time transform many of our attitudes and expectations about life, and thereby help to change what we create for ourselves.

Affirmations can be done silently, spoken aloud, written down, or even sung or chanted. Even ten minutes a day of repeating effective affirmations can counterbalance years of old mental habits. If you become aware that you are repeating habitual negative thought-patterns or attitudes, try saying the affirmation to yourself a few times right then and there."

Affirmations

Affirmations refer to the practice of positive thinking and self-empowerment fostering a belief that a positive mental attitude supported by a formal declaration is an affirmation and will achieve success in anything.

Positive Affirmations are words, mantras, lectures, positive images, spiritual talks, movies, or sacred words that participate in creative thinking patterns that work to de-program negative thinking patterns and at the same time incorporating a positive creative way of thinking. When these affirmations are used persistently, they increase the power of your visualizations, at the same time they bring about healing and creating peace, joy, and prosperity in our lives. Esther Hicks in her book, "Law of Attraction" says, to use affirmations when one is already in a state of happiness and peace. This will create powerful manifestations.

Another author, Brendan Baker, founder of 'The Start of Happiness,' says that affirmations work best when they encompass three elements:

1. *Visualization of the affirmation in one's life.*
2. *Feeling the affirmation in one's physiology.*
3. *Vocalizing the affirmation in a way that one is already congruent with the affirmation.*

How to Write Affirmations

The first thing to do is choose an image, phrase, mantra, or sacred words that can assist you in creating the change you desire. The next step is to decide on an affirmation or a positive statement to repeat when you are in a state of deep relaxation. So, to do this you need to ask yourself what positive changes you would like to make in your life, behavior, attitude, and perception. For example, if you want to create more abundance in your life. Then you can create an affirmation like:

"I create abundance in my life everyday" or "I create prosperity in my life everyday".

Another example if you want to be calm and serene, you can say,

"Let all my thoughts become still." Or "Peace to my mind."

By Choosing your own affirmation or power words and repeating it several times in a day, is to program your unconscious mind. In this way you are programming yourself to carry out your intentions all the time, even when the conscious mind is busy performing other tasks. This way the affirmation works like a belief, creating a powerful effect on the mind and body, enabling the images created by the visualization to come true.

Some important points to remember when writing affirmations:

- *Stay focused on what you want and do not worry over something going wrong. The website www.natashalh.com/how-to-write-positive-affirmations, says that,*
  "We are constantly bombarded with negative messages from the media, co-workers, friends, family members, and even our own minds form limiting beliefs, stress us out, and create a cycle of unhappiness. Criticism, complaining, and negativity are bad for your physical health and even your ability to think."

- *Empty your mind and be still and concentrate on where you want to make a change, or what you would like to happen.*
- *Your affirmations should be believable and realistic. You should believe in that they will come true.*
- *Start formulating an intention of accomplishing the task of the affirmation. Making an intention will bring energy and focus to your affirmation goal.*

- *Make the affirmation personal by using your full name, or by using "I", "My" pronouns. This makes the affirmation binding to you.*
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The following are some positive affirmations that you can use daily to improve your life:

- *I am at peace or Peace to my mind.*
- *I am loved.*
- *I am beautiful.*
- *I am balanced in my creative flow.*
- *I lovingly release the past. They are free and I am free. All is well.*
- *I love and approve of myself.*
- *I love and appreciate myself.*
- *I am safe and I am well.*
- *I communicate with ease and with joy.*
- *I trust my inner wisdom. I am strong, wise, and knowledgeable.*
- *I express my emotions in joyous, positive ways.*
- *I release all fears. I now trust the process of life.*
- *I release all blame. I accept myself as I am. I am at peace.*
- *I release all that is not love.*
- *Every day I am getting better and better.*
- *Everything I need is already within me.*
- *This is an abundant universe and there is plenty for all of us.*
- *Abundance is my natural state of being.*
- *The light within me is creating miracles in my life here and now.*

Shakti Gawain says in "Creative Visualization," to always phrase affirmations in the present tense, not in the future. It is essential to create your desire as if it has already happened. For example, do not say, "I will get a wonderful job." But rather say, "I now have a wonderful new job." This acknowledges that everything is created first on the inner plane.

Another important aspect of affirmation is to affirm with positive words and statements such as do not say, "I no longer eat unhealthy foods." Rather say, "I eat healthy foods and I make healthy eating choices." This way you will be creating a positive visualization scenario, and a positive mental picture.

Shakti Gawain gives a helpful visualization exercise, which is as follows:

> *"Sit or lie in a comfortable position. Relax completely…let all tension drain out of your body and mind… breathe deeply and slowly…relax more and more deeply. Visualize a light within your heart-glowing radiant and warm. Feel it spreading, growing shining out from you farther and farther until you are like a golden sun, radiating loving energy on everything and everyone around you. Say to yourself silently and with conviction, "Divine light and*

divine love are flowing through me and radiating me to everything around me."

Repeat this over and over to yourself until you have a strong sense of your own spiritual energy. If you wish, use any other affirmations of your own power, light, or creative ability, such as God is working through me now. I am filled with creative energy. The light within me is creating miracles in my life here and now."

Removing Negative Thinking Patterns

Another important aspect of visualization is removing barriers/mental or emotional blocks that tend to hold you back. Elson M. Haas, says in his book, "The Detox Diet," that,

> *"Mental detoxification is also important. Cleansing our minds of negative thought patterns is essential to health, and physical detoxification can aid this process. Emotionally, physical detoxification helps us uncover and express hidden frustrations, anger, resentments, and fear, and replace them with forgiveness, love, joy, and hope. Many people experience new clarity of purpose in life during cleansing processes. A light detoxification over a couple of days can help us feel better; a longer process and deeper commitment to eliminating certain abusive habits and eating a better diet can help us change our whole life. Detoxification is part of a transformational medicine that instills change at many levels. Change and personal evolution are the keys to healing."*

In our daily lives we deal with much toxicity. This includes electromagnetic toxicity. We are beings of energy and thus are affected by all energy sources around us, whether they be positive or negative. Elson Haas, says in The Detox Diet that, Electromagnetic toxicity has become common in us daily lives due to cell phones, tablets, computers, and televisions. Along with that we are exposed to radiation exposure from airplanes and medical testing. He goes on to says that "In some ways this persistent electrical interaction with our bodies may alter our sensitive cellular, biochemical, immune, and neurological systems. Our bodies are electric (electromagnetic), and clearly our cells and nerve's function and communicate electrically. It makes sense that our bodies pick up and can be altered by this interaction. Thus, in addressing toxicity and detoxification, we should be aware of these electromagnetic issues as well. Many people have addictive behaviors when it comes to their relatives and loved ones, and these are difficult to identify without taking a break and stepping outside the day-to-day interactivity. With the process of detoxification using detox diets, there are often increased insights into personal feelings and attitudes toward others and our work as well."

Next, we can begin to visualize our goal by Imagining it creatively. It has been said that the mind is ever-expanding consciousness, which means we can imagine anything and everything. Nothing can be visualized that we have already not experienced. We have an infinite variety of memories to choose from. Our life happens in our heads; therefore, we should work to create a more harmonious inner

landscape. The choice is ours. The following is a visualizing exercise to help you get started.

Visualizing Yourself on a Tropical Island

1. *Sit or lie down in a comfortable position. You can use soft relaxation music to create the right atmosphere. Start by imagining yourself on a beautiful tropical Island, with warm winds gently caressing, golden sand and lush trees shading you from the sun. You are alone there on your private Island. The island is surrounded by gentle waves of sea green waters, and you can hear the soft lapping sounds of the waves. It is a beautiful sunny day. Use all your senses to visualize and imagine all the details of the scene to make it real.*

2. *Feel the soft silkiness of the golden sand underneath you, dig your hands and feet into it and experience the texture. Take in the sea green of the waters close by, while looking at the blue skies, and the distant horizon. Watch the white clouds shift and turn while the waves lapping across the sand. You notice a gentle breeze moving the leaves of the trees behind. Birds chirping. Now Imagine you can smell the salty air and taste it on your lips. What else can you smell, taste and see use your imagination and creativity to build up your dream island.*

3. *Once the scene is set, stay in it for at least 10 minutes and gradually increase as you feel more comfortable.*

4. *Let the feeling of peace and serenity fill your being.*

5. *The whole purpose of this visualization is to bring you to this inner place, where you know everything is okay, that all is well now and always. Here you can repeat your affirmation 3-5 times.*

6. *Then slowly let the visualization dissolve, knowing that your secret dream place is always there for you to escape.*

7. *Breathe in and out several times and get up feeling relaxed and rejuvenated.*

The following is a visualization exercise to open your connection to your higher self.

- *Sit or lie in a comfortable position.*
- *Close your eyes and take some deep breaths in through your nose, hold them for a moment, then release them slowly through your mouth.*
- *Inhale through the nostrils, exhale through the mouth*
- *As you inhale, expand your abdomen.*
- *As you exhale, pull your abdomen in.*
- *As you exhale, open the lips slightly so that you are emitting a quiet, slow steady stream of breath.*

- *You must concentrate closely on this for it is one of the most important factors in gaining utmost value from the exercise.*
- *You will be unable to breathe many of these slow breaths in the beginning, which is to be expected. This is all right.*

Doing this meditation will bring silence to your mind and begin to open a connection with the universal energy and higher self.

Removing Blocks

A mental and emotional block is the place where your thoughts and emotions have become frozen, that is they are not in flow with the rest of you. In most cases, blocks come about through repressed feelings generated by trauma, anger, sadness, guilt, fear etc. These emotional events cause the individual to close their feelings and thought processes in that moment. To release the blocked energy (mental and emotional) you need first need to accept those feelings, and then resolve the feeling through acceptance, forgiveness and letting go. Shakti Gawain in "Creative Visualization," says that,

"…in dealing with an area of consciousness where we have a block, we need to first experience (as fully as possible the emotion we have locked up in that area, in a loving, accepting way. In doing so, we get the blocked-up energy moving and we have a chance to observe the underlying negative beliefs or attitudes which caused the problem to begin with. We can take a good, clear look at them and let them dissolve themselves. Amazingly enough, it seems to be the process of pinpointing the constrictive belief and accepting the feelings you have around it which works magic, the difficulty almost inevitably dissolves and disappears eventually once you have understood and accepted yourself. It is much simpler that you may think. The trick is to simultaneously love and accept yourself compassionately for having this belief, and at the same time see clearly that you are ready to let go of it because it is limiting, destructive, self-defeating, and untrue." Gawain goes on to discuss some common beliefs that create blocks and trouble in our life. They are as follows:

- *I am not okay…there is something wrong with me…I am unworthy and undeserving.*

- *I have done bad things (or a bad thing) in my life and I deserve to suffer (be punished) for it.*

- *People (including me) are basically bad-selfish, cruel, stupid, untrustworthy, sinful, or foolish.*
- *The world is an unsafe place.*
- *There is not enough _____ (love, money good things) to go around, so:*
    - *I must struggle to get my share.*
    - *It is hopeless. I will never get enough.*
    - *If I have a lot, someone else will have to do without.*

- *Life is painful, suffering, hard work…It is not meant to be fun or pleasurable.*
- *Love is dangerous…I might get hurt.*
- *Power is dangerous…I might hurt someone.*
- *Money is the root of all evil. Money corrupts.*
- *The world does not work and never will. In fact, it is getting worse all the time.*
- *I do not have control over what happens to me…I am powerless to do anything about my life or the state of the world.*
- *It is important to reflect on these ideas to determine which one affects you the most-that would be your hindering belief system.*

Every one of us has bought into these negative thinking patterns to some degree at some point in their life, and this is what drives our personality daily. To change our negative thinking patterns, we need to first and foremost realize that these negative ideas are just that, ideas, not reality yet. Ideas can be changed-thus beliefs can be changed. They may be the truth at some point in your life, but they are not set in stone. Shakti Gawain says in "Creative Visualization" that "The important thing to realize is that they are only beliefs; they have no objective truth. Although they may seem to be true at times when we look around us, that is only because so many human beings believe them and act accordingly. The most powerful thing you can do (and it is immensely powerful) to change the world is to change your own beliefs about the nature of life, people and reality, and begin to act accordingly."

Shakti Gawain describes some techniques to remove mental and emotional blocks, which are as follows:

Technique I

- *Take a piece of paper and write at the top, "The reason I can't have what I want is …," then immediately begin to write a list of any thoughts that come into your head to complete the sentence. Do not take too much time to write your answers, and do not take it too seriously. Just quickly write down about twenty or thirty things that come to you even if they seem silly or stupid. A sample list might start like this:*

  The reason I cannot have what I want is…
  I am too lazy.
  I do not have enough money.
  It does not exist.
  I have tried before, and it never worked.
  Mother said I could not.
  I do not want to.

  It is too hard.
  I am afraid to.

John would not like it.
It is too much fun. And so on…

Technique 2

- *Try the same exercise, only this time specifically name the thing that you want. For example, "The reason I can't have a good job is…" and proceed as before. Now just sit quietly for a few minutes with your list and see whether any of the thoughts you have written down ring true for you…. That is, whether in some way you believe them. Just try to get a sense of what kind of limitations you put on yourself and your world.*

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Dream Therapy I
by Saiyra Akbar and Shahir A. A.

Dreams are a way to discover the self. Dreams are a manifestation of what we are thinking and feeling. It is what lies underneath our conscious thought, hidden from view, within the unconscious. Dreams enable us to learn more about our inner self and give us a glimpse of the hereafter. It is a well-known saying that when one is dreaming, they are, like the dead. That is, we are dead to this world for the short time we are sleeping and awake in the dream world. Dreams hold a strong stance in all religions, cultures, and traditions. Many of the shamanic rituals are performed in the dream world. Many divine messages were received in the dream world. They are known as guidance from God. John Layard, says in "The Lady of The Hare (1990) that,

" All primitive people recognize [that dreams are messages from God], and accordingly pay great attention to them...all knowledge of the other side of life came to mankind through [dreams], later canalized into dogma, which is its static representation, true but lacking in redemptive efficacy so long as it is divorced from its organic source."

The Holy Scriptures are proof of divine messages that came from dreams. Elsie Sechrist reveals this same truth in her book, " Dreams: Your Magic Mirror", that, " In the Bible (Quran) there are constant references to communication between man and God, between man and the angels, and between man and his higher self through the medium of dream."

The inner self never sleeps, Whatever, we view, see as images are sensory experiences which are permanently recorded by our subconscious mind. Elsie Sechrist says in "Dreams, Your Magic Mirror," that, "Experiments conducted for six weeks on the audience of a theater in New Jersey, in 1956 by the Subliminal Projection Company, established that subliminal advertising can be absorbed by the subconscious. A message flashed at 1/3000th of a second said, "Eat popcorn!" This was flashed on the screen at given intervals, too rapidly for the conscious mind to be aware of it, but the sale of popcorn obligingly increased 37 percent, according to Subliminal James M. Vicary. Sensory experiences are permanently recorded by our subconscious mind, even though we remain consciously unaware of them. Under hypnosis eyewitnesses to a crime can recall detailed facts that they had previously been unable to remember. Asleep or awake, the subconscious, like the tape recorder, registers continuously. This is because the inner self never sleeps. This may also explain why associations with some symbols appearing in dreams are difficult to interpret-They were not consciously observed."

Sechrist further explains that, "The signs, messages and symbols in dreams, then are comprised of everything the dreamer has ever read, heard, said, thoughts, seen, felt, imagined, or eaten-all indelibly registered in the subconscious. This seems to be as true of the prenatal period as of those unconscious moments when

one is asleep or under the influence of an anesthetic or a drug. According to Cayce, the subconscious also retains memories of the past life experiences, both on the earth and on the astral levels between earth lives (reincarnation). These memories too, weave themselves into the symbolism of our dreams." Symbols are a universal language that teaches a certain truth, and each symbol has many meanings derived from all that we have experienced and are experiencing.

History of Dreams: Dreams Around the World

In primitive cultures individuals were unable to distinguish between the dream world and the waking world. They saw that the dream world was not only an extension of reality, but that it was a more powerful world. This can be seen in the Australian belief of the dreaming, where at the beginning of time, a group of souls dreamed the world into being. The Hindus or Indian mythology have related texts found in the Upanishads concerning dreams, that relate dreams as the manifestation of the soul and self. It states that dreams are reflections of our innermost desires, which are hidden from our conscious mind. A dreamless sleep meant that our soul had become connected to the divine (God). The Shamans and Aboriginals believe all of life's important issues can be resolved in the dreamworld, which is why many of their rituals include their shamans going into trance and finding solutions to problems. Dreams are as old as man himself. The ancient cultures of the Sumerian and Mesopotamia date back to 3100 B.C. Dreams were an important aspect of their culture, as they were used for divination purposes. Gudea, the King of the Sumerian city reigned 2144-2124 BC, rebuilt the temple of Ningirsu, as the result of a dream. The Akkadian Epic of Gilgamesh contains numerous accounts of the prophetic power of dreams. First, Gilgamesh himself has two dreams telling of the arrival of Enkidu. Later Enkidu dreams about the hero's encounter with the giant Humbaba. Dreams were also sometimes seen as a means of seeing into other worlds and it was thought that the soul, or some part of it, moved out of the body of the sleeping person and visited the places and persons the dreamer saw in his or her sleep. In Tablet VII of the epic, Enkidu recounts to Gilgamesh a dream in which he saw the gods Anu, Enlil, and Shamash condemn him to death. The Sumerians and Mesopotamians recorded dream knowledge on tablets made of clay. Their goddess Makhin was the Deity associated with dreaming. The Tablets on Dreams Were written in three parts.

a) Symbolic Dreaming-These are warning dreams of bad omens or complicated nightmarish dreams.
b) Message Dreaming- Priests and priestess, kings had these dreams
c) Mantic Dreaming - These types of dreams relate to prophecy and revelations

For exp. A symbolic dream was told to a reed and then burned completely. This would dispel the negative effects of the dreams it heard. It was believed that evil dreams could be sent from an enemy and would deplete the vitality of the dreamer. Protective amulets and charms were made to neutralize the negative effects of symbolic dreams.

Dreams are as old as creation itself. The Japanese believed that traversing and awakening in dreams would help the soul become familiar with afterlife procedures. In the Japanese tradition Emperor Godaigo in the 14th century had a dream to choose Kusunoki Masoashiga as the leader of his military force, whose intelligence and war tactics gave him victory in the Genko War against the Kamakura Shogunate. Kusunoki was a Japanese Samurai who was a known legend in Japan, known best for his loyalty and virtue.

All religions and traditions, pagan and non-pagan beliefs practiced the interpretations of dreams into their lives and used it discover the self. They knew it instinctively as the unfoldment of the self. Interpretations of dreams and visions go back to the beginning of creation, where they were drawn in symbols on cave walls. For as long as we have been able to talk about our dreams, we have been fascinated with them and have strived to understand them. It was known that sleeping and dreaming was a way to connect and communicate with the spirits of the otherworld.

Tibetan and Buddhism Dream Traditions

Dream practices and interpretations in Tibet have been practiced as part of the development of the soul and the individual. The Tibetan healers were called the Tibetan Bon Faith healers, who used dreams to analyze the connection between the different aspects of the human psyche, The website www.tibetanmedicine-edu.org/inde.php/n-articles/tibetan-dream-interpretation, says that,

"Tibetan Bon Faith Healers (Ancient Shamans) used dreams to read the relationship between the spirits and humans and diagnose diseases. There were also independent female "Dream-Tellers", who were also involved with the government to make predictions to the kings about politics and prosperity of the country. After Buddhism came to Tibet in the 7th century, dream analyzing culture developed along with medical knowledge and spiritual practice and thus became a more important subject. Even today, there are eminent spiritual dream tellers and visionaries able to give predictions on future happenings."

Dr. Pasang Y. Arya in his interview with Sylvie Beguin on the same website, explains that, "Dream is the secret language of the mind..." In the West, psychologists and individuals often neglect the religious and spiritual aspects of dreams. Dreams are affected by many things such as the planets, our environment, spirits, and our cultural beliefs. Dr. Pasang Y. Arya explains that the Tibetan dream interpretation is mixed with their cultural belief, "Which is a background of the psychology, and is firmly influenced by Buddhist philosophy of mind and phenomena. In Sutra, dream is not regarded as important by itself, but is used as an important example of illusion. Dream is like a hallucination produced by drugs or other intoxication, without any real basis. In Sutra, dream is then used as analogy of impermanence."

Further on the same website www.tibetanmedicine-edu.org/index.php/n-articles/tibetan-dream-interpretation, Dr.

Pasang Y. Arya further elaborates that in the context of tantric influence on dreams- that also is regarded as an illusion. "...but this illusion is considered an experience like the Bardo state, or 'Intermediate State,' experienced by the mind after death. According to Buddhism, from the moment of death until there is new life, the consciousness enters a state called Bardo. Relating to one's karma, this state lasts from few minutes or few days to a maximum of 49 days. During the death, the dream-like a mental body sees many aspects of its new world with uncertainty and fear. It is a world of lights, colors, and sounds and the mind experiences it like going through nightmares or adventures in the dream. The mind also sees his previous house, family, and work, etc., and tries to continue to engage in daily life but without being able to interact with others. Such experiences occur and it is exceedingly difficult for the consciousness to recognize that death had happened. The situation is remarkably like the dream state, where we feel normal with a body and life that looks real. Friends come to meet us, events happen, and all these aspects are perceived as external factors rather than as our own mind's creation. We must go through the dream and follow its progression without having much impact on it. Because of the similarity between Bardo and dream processes, the Tantric Buddhist's spiritual practice uses dream as a path of spiritual transformation for the mind in a training called "dream yoga," to prepare the consciousness to recognize these illusory states for what they are, and so to develop useful capacities for the moment of death."

Dream analysis in Tibetan culture is usually practiced using Tantric teachings, and how the physical and psychological aspects of the individual work. Looking at the Tantric Philosophy of dream analysis one would need to take into consideration 5 major aspects of the subtle body, which are:

- *The life-force channels.*
- *Psychic Temperature (heat),*
- *Subtle wind.*
- *Consciousness.*
- *The 'essence drop' called the thikle.*

Dr. Pasang Y. Arya says that, "The mind itself is clear, luminous and one, it has no color or form, but when it is confronted to an object, it produces six different consciousness (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mental consciousness), which perceive the external objects and phenomena such as form, sound, smell, taste, and tangibles. The mind, thikle and temperature, moved by the wind power, then circulate through the body without stop till the end of life. This is the subtle level body called 'vajra body' in Tantra. The mystic mind makes its journey to this mystery kingdom that cannot be discovered by the common mind and soul."

When we fall asleep, meditate, or lose consciousness, everything dissolves into our mental consciousness, and all our sense organ begin to fall into sleep mode, and we become unconscious. Dr. Pasang Y. Arya says that, "If the mind could remain in its own place (central channel). It would perceive things as they really are. But

the mind is moved by the subtle wind. The mind begins to wake up, and the consciousness has no choice but to travel through the channels driven by the wind. The dream starts when the consciousness enters channels, and the dreams begins to appear differently, taking on different forms and colors, reflecting its journey through a symbolic language. Whether the channels are clean, healthy, or blocked, tight or in a bad condition, it has an impact on the consciousness! Which is then expressed through the dream in the form of symbols. Which is analyzed by Tibetan Physicians and the knowledge is further used in the diagnosis of any problem, or disease. According to the Tibetan Buddhist and their cultural beliefs the following category of dreams can occur:

- *The dreams influenced by culture and beliefs*
- *Dreams and visions experienced by the yogic spiritual practitioner*
- *Dreams influenced the environment*
- *Planets and spirits*
- *Dreams produced by disease and omens*
- *Premonitory dreams*
- *Dreams are filled with the knowledge of our everyday life, of our problems, and mental and physical health. They can provide us with information about our diseases, our problems, our past, present, and future. For example, the color in our dreams hold significant meaning, Dr. Pasang explains that, "the body is like a mandala. The elements are in their own position; When the consciousness visits these places, the dream is naturally influenced by the reflection of the elements, it is a bit like when you look at the sky, you see it as blue, but the sky itself has no color, it is a reflection. It is the general theory. Then colors are not necessarily to be taken as a sign of sickness. But in the case of disease, it is different. For example, the red color, or also maybe the vision of fire, can show a bile disorder sign. Dream reading is very subtle, as it is a symbolic language. You can never rely one hundred percent on the interpretation because it is exceedingly difficult to decipher the codes of the inner world language. There are no mathematical or logical rules fixed in that matter. You have to learn the ancient dream language interpretation and develop your understanding through your own experience, so it is a long training."*
- *Tibetan Buddhist believe that when one is dreaming, the soul or self, travels to places it has visited. This is also likened to Lucid Dreaming-Which is an advanced form of dreaming. In Lucid dreaming we experience out-of-body soul travel. To dream lucidly is to mentally wake up in a dream. Individuals who practice lucid dreaming can gain conscious control of the events in the dream world. Tibetans and Buddhists believe that the lucid dream experience helps gain knowledge of how the soul travels in the afterlife.*
- *Lucid dreaming has been in existence since man started becoming aware of himself in dreams. We have all experienced a lucid dream, at one time or*

another. A lucid dream is where one sees the dream world like the real world. A simple way to lucid dream is to see everything in the day as if it were a dream, so that the brain knows what it feels like to be conscious.

- *Lucid dream is known as Dream Yoga and is a dream, in which one becomes aware that one is dreaming. So, how does one practice Dream Yoga? On the website www.shambhala.com/snowlion_articles/the-tibetan-yogas-of-dream-and-sleep/ the Tibetan Bon Lama, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains this process. He says that we sleep one third of our lifetime, which is 20 years If one is to live till 60 years. It is essential that we know and understand what is going on during those twenty years. Rinpoche says that to start the dream yoga, do it first in the awakened state. He says,*
- *"...One of the most important things to do is not to just start the dream practice when you go to sleep, but to begin the dream yoga when you awake. Try to be aware of your mind; try to realize how sometimes you can be powerless when the emotion comes. Realizing this, it is important to try to develop some stability while you are awake. And that stability can be supported by the experience of joy, you know, seeing the gifts of life, the positive experiences around oneself! Also, with all the experiences of the daytime, our mind and all our soul experiences get scattered around everywhere. Somehow, we become pieces before we go to sleep. If we go to sleep as the pieces, we are not going to have a good sleep experience. So, we need to try to have some awareness. Try to bring all those pieces together. Become one." He further elaborates that, "Try to feel those experiences of the day and try to dissolve them and then come together in that very moment try to feel this before you go to sleep....and then focus on the peaceful. And to focus on the peaceful, one can pray. Use whatever spiritual tradition you practice. You can ask for help from the guardians, protectors, and the angels. Whatever you believe in."*
- *In his interview with Cindy Loew on June 24, 1998, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talks about his new book, "The Tibetan Yoga of Dream and Sleep." Rinpoche says that you do not need to be a Buddhist to do this. No matter what belief a person comes from we are all sentient beings. Sentient means to be conscious, aware one who has a mind, and the one who has a mind always has difficulty controlling it, when in Samsara (the cycle of birth and death that binds us to the material world). So, you should use whatever support works to help to bring the mind together and at peace. Rinpoche says that, "Dream practice is not as much about what you do when you are sleeping and dreaming as it is about how you use the mind when awake. If the day is spent spaced out and caught up in the elaboration of the conceptual mind, we are likely to be the same in a dream. If we are more present in our life, we will also find that presence in our dreams."*
- *To practice lucid dreaming, one must train the mind while awake first. Along with that try to develop your mind by controlling emotional outbursts. Try to guide your feelings (such as anger, sadness, etc.) in your day-to-day life. This is an important aspect of developing your dream yoga practices. Whatever your state of being is in the daytime, that is the state that you will be in your*

sleep and dream world. Therefore, train yourself to be mindful-That is being present in the moment.

- *Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche says on the website, www.shambhalla.com/snowlion_articles/the-tibetan-yogas-of-dream-and-sleep/ that" Even for someone who doesn't practice dream or sleep yoga, it is good to prepare for sleep, to take it seriously. Purifying the mind as much as possible before sleep, just as we do before meditating, generates more presence and positive qualities. Rather than carrying negative emotions into the night, use whatever skills you must free yourself from them. If you know how to self-liberate the emotion do so..."*
- *Further on he recommends doing whatever you can to remove the tension from your body, and the and the negative attitudes of your mind. Bring in positive affirmations to overcome the negativity of the mind. "Even if you are unable to do the rest of the practice, this is something positive that everyone can incorporate into their daily life."*
- *To further develop the full dream yoga one can read Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book, "The Tibetan Yoga of Dream and Sleep."*
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- ***Dreams in Greek and Roman Traditions***
- *The Greek word for dreams is Oneiros or Oneiroi. The Greeks called the art of interpreting dreams Oneiromancy, and the deity associated with dreaming was Oneiros. Dream interpretation was important in the Greek and Roman cultures. Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and Pythagoras all discussed dreams in their teachings. In addition, Hippocrates and Plato researched the self by interpreting dreams, and wrote texts on dreams and its meanings. The website http://www.dreammoods.com/dreaminformation/history.htm states that,*

"In the Greek and Roman eras, dreams were seen in a religious context. They were believed to be direct messages from the gods or from the dead. The people of that time look to their dreams for solutions on what to do or what course of action to take. They believed dreams forewarned and predicted the future. Special shrines were even built where people can go there to sleep in hopes that a message could be passed to them through their dreams. Their belief in the power of a dream was so strong that it even dictated the actions of political and military leaders. In fact, dream interpreters even accompanied military leaders into battle to help with war strategy. Greek philosopher, Aristotle believed that dreams were a result of physiological functions. Dreams were able to diagnose illness and predict onset of diseases. During the Hellenistic period, the focus of dreams was centered around its ability to heal. Temples, called Asclepieions, were built around the healing power of dreams. It was believed that sick people who slept in these temples would be sent cures through their dreams. Dream interpreters even aided the medicine men in their medical diagnosis. It was believed that dreams offered a vital clue for healers to finding what was wrong with the dreamer. "

An important Dream Text of the Greek and Roman era was "Oneirocritica" which was written by Artemidorus. The text describes dreams as oneiros, which are divided into two main categories:

- *A dream manifested in the impure state of the soul. (a personal dream)*
- *A dream manifested in the pure state of the soul. (divine dreams)*

The god associated with dreams is Morpheus. The Greek God Morpheus was seen as the god who shaped and fashioned the dream state. He was the son of the god Hypnos, who was the god of sleep. Hypnos is believed to have many sons that were considered responsible for different parts of the sleep and dream states. Morpheus, the fashioner of dreams was the most important along with his brothers Phobetor who created frightening dreams and Phantasos who was the designer of fantasy dreams.

The website www.classicalwisdom.com/mythology/gods/morpheus-the-god-of-dreams, says that, "Mythology often personifies aspects of nature and life, transferring these elements into gods. It should be no surprise then that our state of repose-something we do for a third of our life is no exception. In the Greek world, the god of dreams was Morpheus, and in some stories, and fables he is also associated with sleep or unconsciousness. He was the son of the god of sleep, Hypnos, and his mother was Pasithea, the goddess of relaxation, but also paradoxically of hallucinations. Moreover, his grandmother was Nyx, the fearsome deity of night. All of these 'gods' contribute and culminate in the characteristics that we associate with dreaming."

Morpheus, fair in coloring was a handsome Greek God who had the ability to assume forms and act like the humans. The same website explains that Morpheus was assisted by Oneiroi (the dreams gods), who were all his bothers. A group of dream gods created dreams for humans. "One brother Icelus made the dreams seem real, while another Phobetor was responsible for 'phobic' or terrifying dreams. Then Phantasus, the third brother, created fantastic old surreal dreams. Morpheus was their leader. As a result, he ensured that he alone oversaw the dreams of monarchs and heroes. He could even appear to the Gods in Olympus. Unlike his brothers, all of Morpheus dreams were true and many prophetic. Morpheus is derived from the Greek for 'form' or 'shape.' He came to people in sleep and assumed the forms that people dreamt. Morpheus was an artist of dreams; he could shape images and visions and make them seem alive. He could perfectly imitate a person, their voice, their walk, mannerism, and moods. There was one limitation to Morpheus; He could only transform himself into a male figure. The ancient Greeks had a saying regarding the "Arms of Morpheus." When in the embrace of the god, an individual would enjoy deep, peaceful sleep; they would also dream. These were dreams about the future and upcoming events."

The place where Morpheus lived with his family was through the Gates of Morpheus, into the Dream World. The website www.classicalwisdom.com/mythology/gods/morpheus-the-god-of-dreams, says that, "The only entrance to the world was through the Gates of Morpheus. The River of

Forgetfulness and the River of Oblivion, two characteristics of sleep and dreams, were found in Morpheus' Dream World. The realm of dreams was guarded by two monsters who would appear when any man or god came close to the rivers. However, the Olympian Gods such as Apollo and Zeus could enter the Dream world of Morpheus." The myth of Morpheus enables the Greek and Romans to understand dreams and their connection to the self and subconscious.

Egyptian Dream Traditions

The Egyptians considered dreams a sacred part of their culture and their dream interpreters were temple priests who were known as the "Masters of the Secret Things." The Egyptians had omen-texts, that contained a large collection of dreams and its interpretations. They held the belief that dreams were messages from God and should be taken seriously. Dreams were divided into good and bad dreams. Special herbs and actions were taken in case of bad dreams and to ward off their negative effects. The Egyptian deity that protected against negative or bad dreams was Bes, and Serapis was the deity of good dreams. Research has also shown that dreams were recorded on hieroglyphics by the temple priests. According to the website www.dreamhawk.com/dream-encyclopedia/egyptian-dream-beliefs/, that, " The priests were educated and most of their knowledge was taken from the "Book of the Dead."- A book of Egyptian wisdom. In this system of belief, Egyptians said that gods revealed themselves in dreams. They also saw that dreams gave warnings, advice, and prophecies. The ancient Egyptians understand that in dreams, our eyes are opened. Their word for dream, rswt, is etymologically connected to the root meaning "to be awake." It was written with a symbol representing an open eye."

The Egyptians also kept a written account of dream interpretations as it was a roadmap to the varying dimensions of the afterlife. The first written account on dreams is written in the Dream Papyrus-which is known to have been written between 1350-1213 BC and is considered one of the oldest documents on dreams in existence.

The Egyptians lived their daily life based on rituals that honored both the living deities and the afterlife deities. The website www.dreamhawk.com/dream-encyclopedia/egyptian-dream-beliefs, explains that dreaming was associated with afterlife, and thus considered a state that needed to be explored. "The pharaoh descended to the underworld (the unconscious or dimensions of dreams and bodilessness)." There he would follow rituals of soul transformation of death and of Osiris. The God of Judgement of the Egyptian Consciousness. The website further says that, "...that some cultures see death as a journey whose final goal is the recovery of one's true nature."

In 'Dreams, Your Magic Mirror, Elsie Sechrist describes a dream of King Thutmose IV," As many people who have visited the great Sphinx in Giza, Egypt, know, there is a large stone plaque which tells of the dream of King Thutmose IV. Before he become king, the god Hormakhu came to him in a dream and promised him the kingdom if he would clear the sands away from around the Sphinx. (Only the head was then visible.) This he did and later became king."

Other Egyptian beliefs concerning dreams includes, out-of-body experiences, lucid dreaming, and dreaming of soul travel to higher states of consciousness or other realities, such as to the Star System Sirius (Sothis). Prophetic dreams, and futuristic dreams. The website www.ancientpages.com/2020/06/06/the-egyptian-dream-book-reveals-ancient-predictions-of-the-future/ says that,

"The Egyptian Dream is alongside the Babylonian Dream, one of the most widespread ways of interpreting dreams. The belief that dreams can foretell the future has its roots in the distant past. Ancient people believed in precognitive dreams. These were dreams that predicted the future through a sixth sense-a way of accessing future information that is unrelated to any existing knowledge acquired through normal means. Just like many people today, ancient Egyptians believed certain signs or events seen in dreams revealed unpredictable information about the future." Dreams were also used to cure diseases, and gain insights on problems. The Egyptian Dream Book is currently kept at the British Museum. The website www.ancientpages.com/2020/06/06/the-egyptian-dream-book-reveals-ancient-predictions-of-the-future/ describes the books as a hieratic papyrus dating back to the reign of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC). The text contains a list of dreams and their interpretations. "The Dream Book was found in the cemetery at Deir-el-Medina near the Valley of the Kings. According to the British Museum, "It is uncertain who the original owner was, but it passed into the hands of the Scribe Qeniherkhepshef; On the other side of the Papyrus, the scribe copied a poem about the Battle of Kadesh, which took place in the reign of Ramesses II (1279-1213 BC) The Dream book was part of an archive, including a wide variety of literary, magical, and documentary material..."

Some Egyptian Dream Interpretations found in the Dream Book are listed below from the same website:

- *If a man sees himself in a dream dead-It is considered a good dream, it means long life.*
- *If One dreams of a deep well-Bad dream, meant prison.*
- *A shining moon was associated with forgiveness and a large cat symbolized a bumper crop.*
- *If a man sees himself in a dream, and his bed catching on fire- It is considered a bad dream. It means driving away his wife.*
- *If a man sees himself looking after monkeys-It means that change is about to come in your life. This can be either good or bad depending upon symbols in dreams.*

Just like many people today, ancient Egyptians believed that signs and symbols guide one in life's dad-to-day problems and reveal information about future events. Dreams were considered a doorway to the afterlife and other dimensions. This mystery of dreams worlds became a fascination for the wise ones and the temple priests to explore those worlds. Till this day this desire has not diminished.

Jewish Dream Traditions

In the ancient Jewish tradition dreams were channels through which divine

wisdom from God was sent to humans, and prophets. It was believed that if a person were a devout follower of the Torah and its law and was of pious nature then God would communicate with him through dreams. Further, not all dreams were considered from God. Another common belief in Judaism concerning dreams is that if an individual told someone their dreams, the dream event would come to pass. It was advised not to relate their bad dreams to others, as they would come true.

The website www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1076083/jewish/dreams-in-judaism.htm/, says that, "...unless the individual is of exemplary piety, his dreams are not messages from God, and there's no reason to be concerned about them." The same website goes on to explain that dreams are usually a product of our thoughts and feelings, "...that are recycled from what occupied our minds during the day. Negative dreams experienced after stressful incidents can certainly be attributed to those incidents."

If one is troubled with a negative dream. It is advised to have it interpreted in a positive light as the interpreting of the dream with one's perceptions and feelings (the observer effect from the quantum consciousness) allows it to be fulfilled.

The website www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1076083/jewish/dreams-in-judaism.htm/, gives some ways to avert the disastrous results of a bad dream. One way is by the giving of charity, prayer, good actions, and thoughts. Fasting is another way to divert bad omen dreams. "One who has a bad dream may fast, for fasting has great power to avert potential bad decrees. The fast should be accompanied by repentance and disbursement of charity, as well as Torah study and prayer. The fast is not obligatory; If the person is not concerned about the dream and considers it nonsense, he does not have to fast, especially today when dreams have less import than in earlier generations. The fast is observed the day following the occurrence of the dream. If the person is very distressed by the dream, he may fast on that day even if it is Shabbat or a holiday. In such a case, however, the person must fast again on the following day to atone for having fasted on a holy day. There are only two days a year when it is forbidden to fast a "dream fast." The day before Yom Kippur and Purim. If one had a bad dream, during a daytime nap, and wishes to fast, he should do so from the moment he arises for the following twelve hours. If one had a bad dream about someone else, the dreamer is the one who fasts." Another way to divert bad dreams is to make them into good dreams by a ceremony called the Hatavat Chalom on the day the dream occurred. The website,

www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1076083/jewish/dreams-in-judaism.htm/, explains this process. "The ceremony calls for the one who dreamt, to go to three friends and recite various verses and prayers responsively. This prayer is printed in various prayer books (in the old Chabad Siddur) {Hebrew-only edition}. It can be found on page 377."

One can also transform a dream, whose details have been forgotten by the praying of the Priestly Blessing. Some examples of dreams from the Jewish Traditions are when the Prophet Jacob saw in his dreams that angels were descending and ascending from the holy place of God. This implies higher stages of consciousness can be accessed. Elsie Sechrist writes in her book, "Dreams, Your

Magic Mirror," that "In the Bible there are constant references to communication between man and God, between man and angels and between man and his higher self through the medium of dreams." Sechrist further describes a pre-cognitive dream from Prophet Joseph, "Joseph, the eleventh and favorite son of Jacob, had the ability, not only to remember and interpret his own dreams, but to interpret those of others. In his first two dreams the symbols were associated with his work because he was then a 17-year-old Shepherd boy, dreamed he was in the corn fields working with his brothers when suddenly, his sheaf rose and stood upright, and the sheaves of his brothers gathered around and bowed before it. The brothers, recognizing the symbols this implied, resented the arrogance of the dream; and even his father rebuked him when Joseph is second dream showed the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down to him: "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" (Gen. 37:5-10). Another reference to this dream is found in the Quran in Sura Al-Yusuf Verse 4-5, "Remember when Yusuf (joseph) said to his father:" O my father! Verily, I saw (in a dream) eleven stars and the sun and the moon. I saw them prostrating themselves to me." He (the father) said:" O my son! Relate not your vision to your brothers, lest they arrange a plot against you. Verily! Shaitan (Satan) is to man an open enemy!"

This was a prophetic dream which took a long time to manifest. Scholars suggest between 20-30 years. The young Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because of their jealousy and sometime later he rose to the position of overseer in the house of Potiphar. Then, having rejected the advances of Potiphar's wife, he found himself in prison, while there he correctly interpreted two pre-cognitive dreams for two fellow prisoners. One, the Pharaoh's butler, dreamed: A vine was before me; and in the vine were three branches; and it was as though budded, and blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand." Joseph interpreted the symbols of the dream as follows: The growing vine-the butler would live. The three branches indicated three days, and the cup in Pharaoh's hand meant that he (the butler) would resume his duties as butler. The Pharaoh's baker, however dreamed: "I had three white baskets on my head. And in the uppermost basket there was all manner of bake meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head." Joseph foretold the baker's death within three days."

Joseph was able to interpret the symbols of the dream for the baker and the butler. In the same book, Sechrist says that, "Because of the accuracy of his interpretations, the Pharaoh sent for him when he himself had been disturbed by a recurring dream. The Pharaoh, dreaming he stood by the Nile River, saw seven fat cows come up out of the Nile and browse on the reed grass. Then seven thin cows arose from the river and devoured the seven fat cows. In the second dream, he saw seven plump good ears of grain growing on one stalk followed by seven thin ears blighted by the east wind. These swallowed the plump ears." (Gen. 41) He interpreted the dream as seven years of abundance followed by seven years of famine and advised the Pharaoh to store surplus grain. Thus, he was released from prison and given a high status and respectful position. The dream came to pass and by storing the surplus grain from the seven years of abundance the Pharaoh was able to provide food to his people during the seven years of famine.

The meaning of his youthful dream also came to pass but gradually. He became Pharoah's most trusted Vizier and was the second in command in the Land of Egypt. Most scholars and theologians agree that the eleven stars represent the eleven brothers who gave into their brother's higher wisdom. The sun represents Jacob, Joseph's father, and the moon his mother Rachel.

It may be useful to note that dreams in Judaism were of another nature, when compared to dreams in our time. They were pure in nature, less cluttered from an endless list of daily stresses. Today, our minds are bombarded with daily anxieties of our hectic lives and with the burden of technology. Elson M. Haas says in "The Detox Diet", We often deal with electromagnetic toxicity which has become so commonplace in these modern times with our daily exposure to computers, cell phones, and televisions, plus radiation exposure from airplane travel and medical testing. In some ways, this persistent electrical interaction with our bodies may alter our sensitive cellular, biochemical, immune, and neurological systems. Our bodies are electric (electromagnetic), and clearly our cells and nerve's function and communicate electrically. It makes sense that our bodies pick up and can be altered by this interaction."

Christian Dream Traditions

In Christianity dreams were considered a way to access divine communication. There are many references to the Bible, where God Communicates His will to prophets, messengers, and angels. In the Old Testament it says, "And He said, "Hear now my words. If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision and will speak unto him in a dream." (12.6). The Bible defines a dream in Job 33:15, "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, as they lie in their beds."

The website www.beliefnet.com/faiths/christianity/what-the-bible-really-says-about-dreams-and-visions.aspx, explains that "a dream is a vision of the night. The verse also teaches that a dream occurs when deep sleep falls upon men. According to the Bible, a vision is something that occurs when a man is awake, while a dream is something that occurs when a man is asleep. Some who study dreams say that we are always dreaming when we sleep, but we only remember the dreams right before we awake." Dreams are real. Our soul is the one traveling the dream worlds, while we lie sleeping. Our soul is experiencing from our consciousness, guiding us through the language of symbols, colors, and places, revealing the hidden truths of our psyche. But we are unable to see them as our minds are constantly cluttered with other thoughts and things. We create hindrances by stresses, impurities of the physical form (Our toxic self), physical exhaustion, and lack of interest.

Everything we see, hear, read, taste, touch, leaves an imprint on our unconscious/subconscious mind. Elsie Sechrist says in her book, "Dreams, Your Magic Mirror, "that, "The signs, messages, and symbols in dreams, then, are comprised of everything the dreamer has ever read, heard, said, thought, seen, felt, imagined, or eaten-all indelibly registered in the subconscious."

In Christianity, many dreams of guidance and prophecy were given to Jesus and his family. The disciple Matthew talks about four dreams that Joseph was given that were associated to the birth of Jesus. He also recorded the dream of the three wise men warning them not to return to Herod. Elsie Sechrist describes these dreams in "Dreams, Your Magic Mirror," that,

"Five dreams of guidance for the Holy Family are found in Matthew. The first one explains to Joseph the pregnancy of Mary: "...the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary for thy Wife. For the conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost, and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: For he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt.1:20-21) Joseph was also warned of Herod's plan to kill the child Jesus and was told to flee with him to Egypt. (Matt.2:13) After the death of Herod an angel appeared again in a dream and said to Joseph: "Arise and take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel: For they are dead which sought the young child's life." (Matt.2:20) "

There are two main dream categories, prophetic dreams, and warning dreams:

- *An example of a prophetic dream is listed above. Another important set of prophetic dream is found in the 'The Book of Revelation,' which is a series of visions and dreams of John. Sechrist explains that John while in exile pondered on his dreams which helped him grow in consciousness. He also worked to improve his dream state through the act of meditation and prayer, "to fully comprehend the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in his life."*
- *Another example of a warning dream is apparent when Pilate's wife, a foreigner in the land, was warned in a dream, that her husband must avoid the persecution of Jesus. The website https://biblehub.com/job/33-15.htm, "While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered terribly in a dream today because of Him." Matthew 27:19 She told him not to condemn Jesus.*

Dreaming is a channel for spiritual revelation and communication, and in this way, dream play a significant role in being guided by a divine power. Other philosophies of the Christian religion such as Justin Martyr believed that dreams gave us a medium through which one receives spiritual communication with the divine. He also believed that dreams encourage the belief that the soul lives on after death. Thus, introducing the concept of reincarnation.

Another Christian philosopher and theologian Augustine believed that dreams were vital for humans to perceive the invisible, spiritual reality. Through the access of spiritual dreams, he was able to record that humans perceive reality in different ways. The following is a summary of his dreamwork theory.

A. *The inner perception of our outer experiences is symbolized in our dreams.*
B. *That our experience of the physical world leaves mental images and impressions that show-up in our dreams.*

C. *We as individuals can tap into divine consciousness, where we can meet with divine entities such as angels, prophets, and even dreams.*

Another Theologian Thomas Aquinas held the belief that, mental and rational thoughts and what our senses perceived from the outer world, recorded its impressions onto the subconscious mind-Thus creating our dream worlds. He received many divine dreams that guided him to write his book, "Summa Thelogica."

Elsie Sechrist describes a dream of St. Francis of Assisi in her book, 'Dreams, Your Magic Mirror,' "Few people know how a dream influenced the destiny of St. Francis of Assisi.... after his first serious illness, civic war broke out in Sicily, and he responded excitedly to the prospect of involving himself in it. While he was still weighing the matter in his mind, he had this dream: He was standing in his father's shop when it suddenly turned into the stately hall of an unknown palace. The shelves gave place to stacks of shining shields, helmets, spears, and swords, which reached up to the ceiling. All were marked with the sign of the cross. As he gazed at them in wonder, he heard a voice say, "All this shall belong to thee and thy warriors!" Relating the dream to the Sicilian war, Francis took it as an omen and at once rode south with his friends to enlist. He had hardly left Assisi behind him, however, when his old illness returned, and he spent the night in Spoleta in a delirium of fever. In his state of half wakefulness, the same voice addressed him again but with sterner emphasis:" You have misunderstood the apparition in Assisi. Go back to your native town. There it will be made known to you that you shall do." Against his own will, Francis returned to Assisi. The third time he heard the voice, it said: "Francis, do you not see that My House is in ruins? Go and restore it for Me." Francis then rebuilt the old church of Assisi-the first rung of the ladder that led him to sainthood."

Dreams have the power to change our mundane existence, to a more aware, evolved one. We can change the way we live, we can improve our financial situation, our communication skills, our relationship problem or find creative new technologies for the betterment of mankind. So never stop believing in dreams.

"The only thing that will stop you from fulfilling your dreams is you." -Tom Bradley

"Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not, remember that you now have was once among the things you only hoped for." -Epicurus

Islamic Dream Traditions

"Yesterday is but today's memory, tomorrow is today's dream."-Kahlil Gibran

In the Islamic religion and culture dreams occur when one falls asleep. This act enables our souls to experience another reality or place. When one is asleep, he/she is in a similar state as death. The soul can leave the body and travel the dream worlds. There are three kinds of major dreams is the Islamic religion, the

truthful dream, the dream that comes from a deep personal desire and a dream that comes from the devil.

The website www.whyislam.org/islam/dreams, states that,

"The Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him categorized dreams into three types:

- *A vision or true dream is one that is from God. The same website explains that a true dream are dreams that are dreamt by noble, pure hearted individuals, who follow the righteous path. An example the website describes the famous dream of Joseph." The story of Joseph in Quran is perhaps the best example of an interpretation of true dreams. (The same story is found in the bible, and Old Testament, with slightly different interpretations.) The chapter speaks of three dreams, the dream of Joseph, the dreams of the two prisoners, and the dream of the King. Each of these dreams had a meaning that later unfolded into the real world. For example, the Quran describes one dream, "Verily, I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows which were eaten by seven lean cows; and seven green ears of corn and other(seven) dry. O Chiefs (of my court)! Explain to me my dream if you are able to interpret dreams." (Quran 12:43) Most people at the time were unable to interpret this dream and considered it to have no meaning. But Joseph interpreted this dream to mean that Egypt will experience seven prosperous years followed by seven years of drought and famine. This interpretation saved the people of Egypt from starvation." Other forms of good dreams come in many shades and varieties. Any vision or dream you have that makes you feel good, is considered a good dream. Such as seeing yourself in the light, in heaven, wearing dignified robes. A good dream is said to be divided into 2 parts; a) Direct Dream: When an individual sees an event in a dream and the exact event occurs during the day. The event occurring is the interpretation; b) A dream that is in the form of symbols, images, and needs interpretations from dream expert. (a priest, rabbi, maulana, holistic life coach or spiritual counselor).*

- *A false dream which comes from the devil. The dreams that come from the devil are dreams that frighten you, are hateful, depraved etc. It is nightmarish, filled with dark, gloomy feelings and images. The website www.whyislam.org/islam/dreams/, describes a way to overcome a false dream, "The Prophet Muhammad gave instructions about dealing with these types of dreams. One man came to the Prophet and told him that he had a dream that his head had been cut off and that he was chasing it. The Prophet laughed and said, when satan plays with one of you in your dreams do not mention it to people." This directly refers to not interpreting bad dreams as they will come true. This is like the Judaism belief that for a dream to manifest, one needs to interpret it, then it comes to pass. If you have a bad dream do not tell others or interpret it. You can also fast for the day, pray and give charity.*

- *A meaningless everyday dream which could come from one's lower self or subconscious thoughts. The meaningless dream stems from our daily actions, images, thoughts, and feelings, and may or may not have significance. The website www.whyislam.org/islam/dreams/, explains that, "This dream might originate from one's subconscious, what they ate in the day, or simply a release of things in their short-term memory. The way these dreams can generally be distinguished from the true or false dream is the feeling one has. The true dream is accompanied by a sense that it was inspired by God. The false dream is usually frightening of a nightmare. The meaningless dreams are usually just materialistic or carry no significant spiritual feeling accompanied with them."*

Dreams invoke the belief that there is more to life than this world. That the soul can roam other dimensions and realities- That is other states of consciousness. The website www.whyislam.org/islam/dreams/ says that "Dreaming is a form of the soul connecting with other souls or events in a different dimension."

"There is nothing in which people deal with from the different sciences that is more obscure, delicate, exalted, noble, difficult and problematic than dreams because they are a type of revelation and type of Prophethood." Ibn Qutaybah ad-Dinawari

Another website https://www.al-islam.org/180-questions-enquiries-about-islam-volume-two-various-issues/18-what-reality-dreams, describes how there are numerous interpretations about the reality of the dreams which can be categorized into two categories:

1. Materialistic Interpretation
2. Spiritual Interpretation

"The materialists say there could be several causes of dreams: It is possible that dreams are a direct consequence of the daily acts of man, i.e., whatever has transpired with man over past days becomes embodied for him in his thoughts, whilst he sleeps. Possibly, a series of unfulfilled desires become a reason for witnessing dreams - a thirsty person observes water in his dreams, and a person awaiting someone, who has gone on a journey, dreams that he has arrived. (From ancient times, it has been said that a camel witnesses cottonseed in its dreams!) It is likely that fear of something causes man to dream about it; it has been repeatedly observed that those who possess fear of thieves witness them in their dreams."

The same website goes on to explain Sigmund Freud and his followers have presented their material explanation for dreams:" In the course of a detailed introduction they define dreams as being the gratification of repressed tendencies which, with alterations, creep into the arena of self-consciousness, to deceive the "I" within man. Explanation: After accepting the fact that the human mind is comprised of two parts: The self-conscious part (that, which is associated with the day-to-day thoughts, voluntary knowledge and the freedom of choice of man) and the sub-

conscious part (that, which is concealed within the inner-self, as an unfulfilled tendency and inclination), they go on to state: It frequently happens that in the state of sleep, when the 'self-conscious' apparatus has shut down, the inclinations and tendencies which we have been unable to gratify due to certain reasons and which have accumulated in our inner-self turn to the sub-conscious in order to achieve a kind of fictitious and imaginary gratification. At times this is reflected without any change (like an aficionado, who witnesses his beloved, whom he has lost, in his dreams), while at other times there occurs a change in form which is reflected in appropriate appearances, in which case there arises the need for interpretation (of the dreams).”

The same website further discusses how dreams can help diagnose illnesses and give clues to healing those illnesses. “Some of the experts of the field of nutrition believe that there exists a relationship between 'dreams' and 'the nutritional need of the body', and are of the opinion that if, for example, a person happens to witness blood trickling from his gums in his dreams, it means that the quantity of ascorbic acid in his body has diminished! And if he dreams that his hair has turned white, it can be inferred that he suffers from an inadequacy of vitamin B!! “

The website goes on to explain further how there are many types of dreams. “However, spiritual philosophers offer a different explanation for the occurrence of dreams. They state that dreams are of several kinds:

- Dreams that are related to the bygones, inclinations, and desires - and these constitute a major portion of man's dreams.

- Dreams that are distressing and incoherent; these are an outcome of delusion and imagination (although it is possible that they could possess psychological reasons)

- Dreams that are related to the future and provide information in connection with it. Undoubtedly, dreams that are related to the past and the embodiment of the scenarios that man has seen during his life do not possess any interpretation. Similarly, distressing dreams - which are an outcome of disturbing thoughts and are like the thoughts that manifest themselves for man in the state of delirium, too cannot possess any interpretation in connection with the future issues of life. However, psychologists and psychoanalysts utilize them and consider them to be a door for the comprehension of the human unconscious self and a key for the treatment of psychological disorders. As such, interpretation of these dreams is used for the purpose of uncovering the mysteries of the mind and the origins of diseases, and not for revealing future happenings of life. As for the dreams that are related to the future, they too are of two kinds: One kind consisting of dreams that are plain, clear, and explicit, and which do not require any interpretation whatsoever; and amazingly enough, at times, materializing exactly as witnessed either in the near or distant future - without the slightest of differences. The second kind are those dreams which prophesize future events but, due to the influence of certain mental and spiritual factors, have undergone a change of form and hence need to be interpreted. There are so many instances for each of these dreams that the existence of all of them cannot be denied. Not only have they been mentioned

in religious sources and books of history, but these have also been noticed in our own lives and the lives of those who are known to us, in a measure that prevents us from considering them to be mere coincidence. Tafsir-e-Namuna, vol. 9, pg. 312"

In the Islamic culture, dreams are a map to guide one towards soul-development and expansion of consciousness. They are also a vital aspect for divine communication, inspiration and enable creativity to manifest in the world. The Quran mentions many dreams that were sent to prophets as divine communication. In addition, there is a dream book, "The Great Book of Interpretation of Dreams," by a 7th century scholar and theologian by the name of Ibn Sirin, which gives an extensive collection of different dream interpretations.

Other World Traditions

In Chinese lore there is a book called T'ung Shu which has a whole section contributing to dreams and its interpretations. The website http://www.dreammoods.com/dreaminformation/history.htm

"Dreaming can be seen as an actual place that your spirit and soul leaves every night to go and visit. The Chinese believed that the soul leaves the body to go into this world. However, if they should be suddenly awakened, their soul may fail to return to the body. For this reason, some Chinese today, are wary of alarm clocks. Some Native American tribes and Mexican civilizations share this same notion of a distinct dream dimension. They believed that their ancestors lived in their dreams and take on non-human forms like plants. They see that dreams as a way of visiting and having contact with their ancestors. Dreams also helped to point their mission or role in life."

The Sufis receive divine truths through dreams and visions. They then use the knowledge, symbols from the dreams for the guidance, clarity, and wisdom so they could walk the spiritual path as a part of evolving consciousness. Sufi mystics regard sleep as a time for the mind and body to fall asleep into a state of rest. When we sleep, we move into the dream world consciousness the place where we came from and the place where we go in the afterlife. The dreaming state is place where we can grow spiritually, heal from diseases, and restore our natural disposition. We become innocent as a child and look at the wonders of the dream world in awe. The website www.upliftconnect.com/sufi-teachings-light-your-way/, says that the "The dream world is an important portal to the Divine and to higher guidance. The Sufi approach to dream science is to share your dreams with a spiritual teacher who can give a divine interpretation of your dreams, rather than relying on commonplace interpretations."

Pamela Ball says in her book, "10,000 Dreams Explained,", that "Ancient peoples had great faith in prophetic or clairvoyant dreams which they called visions. They believed that they were sent by the gods as warnings and guidance. In the light of the modern-day belief, many dreams come from the higher self, or more spiritual side of ourselves, we have come almost full circle. By the fourth century A.D. dreams were considered important enough for a seer called Artemidorous to

have put on record "The Five Books of Dream Interpretation". Until the 19th century, when Freud began to look at dreams, many of the interpretations which Artemidorous gave were accepted as accurate. Indeed, many books on dream interpretation still hold traces of his interpretations." She further says in the same paragraph,

"The early psychoanalysis, particularly of Freud, believed that a number of dreams could be explained according to our attitude to our own sex and sexuality. It is more likely that this explanation pertained because less was understood about the mechanisms of the mind. The dreamer therefore linked into his basic knowledge of himself." Pamela Ball goes on to explain Sigmund Freud's theory on dreams and how it reveals aspects of the self. Freud's work on dreams arose from his own work as a psychoanalyst and was based on the belief that they were distinguished expressions of what went on below the surface of the mind. Sigmund Freud revived the importance of dreams and its significance and need for interpretation. He revolutionized the study of dreams.

Modern Day Dreaming - Psychology of Dreams

Dreams are reflections of our lives. They are our thoughts, emotions, our state of beings in the day expressing themselves when asleep. "Dreams are a manifestation of the subconscious. Any (personal) condition before becoming of reality is first dreamed." (Edgar Cayce 136-18)

Sigmund Freud, Psychologist has also believed that our dreams are expressions of our life and our subconscious. Carl Jung has furthered the study of dreams by finding that everyone's dream is unique to their personal experiences and their personality. Everything we experience good or bad manifests itself in our dreams. In 'Dreams, Your Magic Mirror,' Elsie Sechrist quotes Edgar Cayce, concerning the activity of the soul during sleep. "Sleep is that period when the soul takes stock of what it has acted upon, from one rest period to another; drawing comparisons, as it were, that make for harmony, peace, joy, love, suffering, patience, brotherly love, kindness-all fruits of the spirit. Hate, harsh words, unkind thoughts, and oppressions are fruits of Satan. The soul either abhors what it has passed through, or it enters into the joy of the Lord." (364-4) Sechrist explains that Edgar Cayce believed that all phases of man's nature are expressed and revealed in his dreams. This is to guide him to the higher states of his own being, by the perfecting of the multidimensional aspects of his self-which include his physical, mental, and spiritual life.

Our dreams set the stage for our day. If we wake up feeling good, happy, and cheerful, it is because our soul is satisfied with our past experiences which includes our previous days endeavors. Whereas, if we wake up in a gloomy despair we are not satisfied with our life and/or previous days experiences. Elsie Sechrist quotes from Eric Fromm's book, "The Forgotten Language,"

"...One reason why certain people prefer to dismiss their dreams as nonsense:" ... If all our dreams were pleasant phantasmagorias in which our hearts' wishes were fulfilled, we might feel friendlier toward them. But many of them leave us in an

anxious mood; Often they are nightmares from which we awake gratefully acknowledging that we only dreamed. Others', though not nightmares, are disturbing for other reasons. They do not fit the person we are sure we are during daytime. We dream of hating people whom we believe we are fond of, of loving someone whom we thought we had no interest in. We dream of being ambitious, when we are convinced of being modest; We dream of bowing down and submitting, when we are so proud of our independence. But worse than all is the fact that we do not understand our dreams while we, the waking person, are sure we can understand anything if we put our minds to it. Rather than be confronted with such an overwhelming proof of the limitations of our understanding, we accuse the dreams of not making sense."

Our dreams leave us with the moods we will be in for the day. Our day-to-day experiences affect our consciousness, which in turn affects our hidden psyche and nature of dreams. There are ways in which we could improve our dream world, thus our life in general.

Research in sleep and dreams have proved that dreams are an important part of our physical and mental well-being. Everyone's dreams are for the development of their soul if we would interpret the dreams and visions correctly. In whatever form dreams are revealed to us, they reflect our life, and the subconscious. Another way dreams or visions are revealed is from the superconscious. Elsie Sechrist further describes the varying aspects of our consciousness. "Modern day psychiatry divided the mind into the conscious and the unconscious/subconscious, but Cayce said a third division exists which he called the superconscious mind. This portion of the mind has retained the memory of God's presence. It is man's remaining tie and his communications links with his original spiritual consciousness."

The language of dreams is symbolic. Symbols have different meanings to different people. Everyone's upbringing, belief system, life experiences, education will reflect in the meaning of the symbol. Gary K. Yamamoto in his book, "Creative Dream Analysis: A Guide to Self-Development," explains with an example that if "The butcher and the vegetarian would probably have conflicting ideas of what the meaning of the symbol "meat" should be. Even if they tried to put their conscious bias aside, their personal ideas and feelings about any given symbol are already a part of their subconscious mind."

Yamamoto says that the experiences of the individual and the answers to our problems are found in the form of symbolic messages, which are found deep within our subconscious mind. The study and research of dreams is towards the upliftment of the individual conscious, which also affects the planetary consciousness. Through personal inner growth and self-improvement bit by bit, light by light (as we are all a bit of light) the consciousness of humanity rises to a higher octave, a higher state of being.

The power of dreams on the human psyche, which includes the consciousness, subconscious and superconscious is great and is expressed by our actions, and by what we dream while sleeping. Elsie Sechrist in her book, "Dreams,

Your Magic Mirror," explains that if an individual is not able to meet his/her own expectations or has failed to meet his own values and beliefs-his standards. That is if he is not true to himself. Then he "...may suffer a recriminating dream that pulls him up short. This type of dream exposes the dark or negative aspects of the self which Jung calls "the realization of the shadow." In one such case, a married man who was succumbing to temptations of adultery asked for an interpretation of a particular dream and was told by Cayce: "This dream is a warning. Prepare to meet the conditions as a man and not as a weakling. Remember first the duties you owe to those to whom the sacred vows are given-Beware." (2671-5)

Sechrist further quotes Edgar Cayce on the power of dreams on the individual self, and how it influences the consciousness. "Forget not that it has been rightly said that the creator, the gods and the God of the universe speak to man through his individual self. Man approaches the more intimate conditions of that field of the inner self when the conscious is at rest in sleep; at which time more of the inner forces are taken into consideration and studied by the individual. If a man desires to receive God's approval, it is his duty to try not only to understand himself, but also to understand his individual relationship to others. This he can do through the reception of messages from the higher forces themselves, as in dreams." (2744-4)

Often after we awaken, we cannot remember our dreams. This occurs for several reasons, which Edgar Cayce outlines also in his teaching on dreams. They are.

- *Physical exhaustion*
- *Mental and emotional distresses*
- *Impurities of the mind and body.*
- *Materialistic view on life*
- *Lack of interest*

Benefits of Remembering Dreams

There are many benefits to remembering your dreams. The following are some ways in which dreams can benefit us:

1. *Understanding your true self, and your psychic self-Thus facing yourself*
2. *Encouragement and Inspiration*
3. *Expansion of Consciousness and creativity*
4. *Practical guidance in personal and business affairs.*

5. *Guidance for healing yourself, that is your mind, body, and spirit.*

6. *Experiencing past life memories, and other dimensions such as out-of-body experiences.*

7. *Development of your Spiritual Nature, and higher self*

8. *Inner Peace*

9. *Finding answers to your problems*

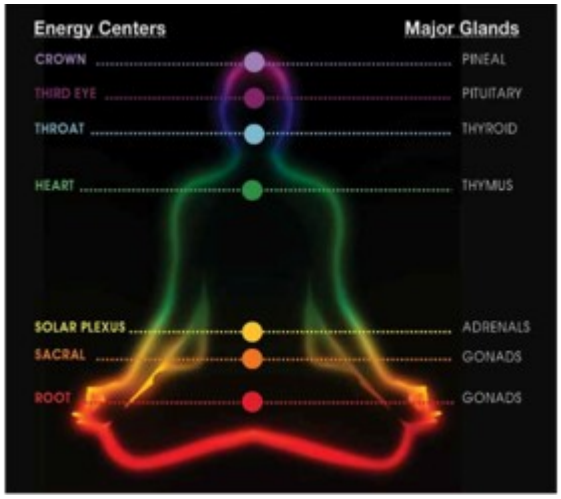
Ways to Improve Your Dream State

There are several ways one can improve their dreaming state, and make it a positive, uplifting experience. The following are some suggestions to improve their dream:

- *One way is through meditation. One can open to dreams by the act of meditating. Meditation stills the mind, and opens our centers(heart), by bringing us closer to God and the universal energy force. It lifts our consciousness to a higher level. Further, by silencing the mind and attaining a peaceful state, one can listen to the messages of the subconscious. Elsie Sechrist says in 'Dreams, Your Magic Mirror,' that "Meditation, which is the art of listening with the subdued ego, improves the clarity of dreams, expands the consciousness, and encourages extrasensory perceptions by breaking down the barriers between the conscious mind and the subconscious and superconscious". Also, through meditation one can free themselves from their lower self. As we balance our seven chakra (energy) centers we can create a connection with the soul. Elsie Sechrist states in, "Dreams, Your Magic Mirror" that, "In meditation, man opens himself to those benign powers which are the strongest forces in the universe, as well as to all time, all space, and all levels of consciousness. It is his attempt to communicate with his source, with God. Meditation is man listening for God's voice, whereas prayer is 'man talking to God'."*

In addition, through meditation one can free themselves from their lower self. As we balance our seven glandular centers (the seven chakras, see Figure below) through meditation and proper breathing, we can create a connection with the soul. Reciting positive affirmations every night before sleeping such as "Peace to my mind." Or "Create in me a pure heart," can help create a peaceful state for positive dreaming.

- *Another way to create a positive dream state is by praying for guidance.*



https://afthealing.com/7-chakras-glands/

Creative Dreams

Creative dreams reflect the higher inner self and the superconscious. Many have received inspiration and creative, innovative ideas through dreams. Inventors and scientists have experienced dreams to guide them in bringing forth a new inventio, or a new scientific discovery. Elsie Sechrist says in "Dreams, Your Magic Mirror," that, "Wolfgang Mozart declared that he received his inspirations in a semiconscious state, and George Frederic Handel supposedly received the melody for the last movement of his oratorio Messiah in a dream. Inventive ideas also presented themselves to Benjamin Franklin. The Singer sewing machine is said to have been conceived in a dream. Singer had worked ceaselessly but to no avail to develop his machine. Then one night he dreamed of a phalanx of knights dressed in chain mail. Each one carried a long sharp lance which rested on his stirrup. At the point of each lance was a hole. Until this moment, Singer had been trying to perfect a needle with the hole at the base, and the dream showed him his error. Neils Bohr, the famous Danish atomic physicist, is said to have dreamed of the planetary system, and thus discovered that the atomic nucleus was surrounded by circling electrons like the sun's orbiting planets." This goes on to suggest that we receive divine guidance and inspiration for creative ideas from the superconscious aspect of our consciousness. We should also remember to use our rational self and intellect to validate the dreams. Through dreaming we can open the doors to our creative expression and expand our consciousness to bring new ideas into the world.

Dream Interpretation and Self-Development

Our dreams are powerful tools to solve our everyday problem and for the continuous development of our soul consciousness. When we dream, we open the lines of communication between our conscious and unconscious mind, and further, our connection to the superconscious opens. Then our inner intelligence can communicate with these varying states of consciousness. Usually, we are too busy with our daily work, and other activities to worry about our inner self and the

messages they are trying to relay to us. But we all have a desire to touch upon the unconscious and superconscious part of our mind, to hear the hidden messages of our psyche and divine self. All this leads to unraveling the mystery of who we are, and what our sole purpose is.

Many Dreams come in the form of cryptic messages and symbolism and we must learn to understand what they are trying to communicate to us. Gary Y Kamamoto says in, "Creative Dream Analysis: A Guide to Self-Development," …a dream may reenact a situation that is causing a problem and present a solution. While there are many ways to solve any problem, the solution provided in our dream will probably be a very practical one, one that we can apply immediately. As we make changes in our lives, our dreams will change accordingly. Each moment-by-moment decision, will cause our messages to adapt and change appropriately."

It is recommended to record your dreams as they happen, so you can find solution to your problems as soon as they are revealed. Gary K. Yamamoto further explains that by acknowledging the messages of our dreams we can immediately recognize a problem and then apply the solution. "Greek Philosophers long ago stressed the importance of self-knowledge as the path to wisdom. Our dreams can be the medium through which we achieve insight into ourselves. Constructive use of the knowledge gained will result in change, growth, and eventually wisdom. This process occurs as a natural consequence of our evolution."

In our everyday hectic lives, we are bombarded with problems, choice-making, decisions, financial problems, family problems, work-related problems, relationship problems etc. This creates stress in our lives and in our selves. Our modern-day life is a list of never-ending tasks, choices, decisions and sometimes the inability to make the right decision or choices. We struggle with relationship problems both on a personal, and a business level. Experts confirm that the stress caused from our daily life is the cause of the increasing mental and emotional disorders in our society. Gradually this day-to-day stress begins to accumulate and block our natural energy, resulting in physical diseases and mental illnesses. Gary K. Yamamoto says in "Creative Dream Analysis: A Guide to Self-Development," that, "Rarely does a single incident result in a major problem. Stress is created over time, after days, weeks, and even years of the repetition of events. A problem during the day may trigger the release of a vast store of memories of similar incidents from our past. Now, instead of having a single problem, we are confronted with many. The emotions from our memories are restimulated and compound each other. When we finally walk out of the office and head home, these problems will not simply disappear. They linger on and on, resulting in an ever-rising level of stress. Unless this constant buildup is stopped, it may become impossible for us to maintain a proper psychological balance."

Yamamoto goes on to explain that our minds continue to think of what happened during the day, even after we retire for sleep. As we fall into sleep dreams take over by our inner intelligence (the unconscious/subconscious). Our most urgent problems and the events that created the problem are

recreated by our subconscious mind in the language of dreams-symbols. That is when our intelligence begins to come up with an appropriate solution. Gary K.

Yamamoto says in "Creative Dream Analysis", that "Owing to the nature of the symbolic language, the solution may not appear to be reasonable or logical to our analytical minds. For example, suppose our problem is with a tyrannical boss. In our dreams, we may shoot him with a gun. This solution is neither reasonable nor logical, but it is a solution, one that will satisfy the mind and allow it to attempt once again to join the body and get some rest. Usually, however, additional problems are encountered, and rest is not possible. Our inner intelligence will recreate another problem and provide yet another solution." Gary explains that these dreams help solve problems and since they result in an emotional reaction, he calls them "Physical/Emotional Clearance" Dreams. "This clearance process usually continues for about a half an hour until all problems encountered are solved. When completed both mind and body can rest simultaneously. A period of deep rest follows for approximately an hour and a half. Both the mind and body can use this period for complete rejuvenation. The mind then rises to a level of greater consciousness and continues the process of clearance through a new set of dreams."

The second phase of dreaming begins until resolution is reached and rest is possible. Yamamoto explains that the process of recreating the problem scenario and resolving of the problem continues throughout the night in four dream periods. Occasionally our inner intelligence might encounter a problem that is hard to solve due to its emotional charge. Then we spend the whole night in turmoil, trying to solve the problem and unable to get the needed rest. Yamamoto describes a dream of this kind in "Creative Dream Analysis", "In this dream, I spent a lot of time adjusting knobs and dials. There seemed to be an endless number of these, and I knew that they had to be adjusted correctly so that I could communicate with, only that I had to. There was a lot of urgency to complete what I was doing. It seems that I would almost get it, only to have the communications distorted. I got up feeling beat. The person relating this dream had just built a microwave television receiver. He then spent the rest of the evening trying to get the system to function. No matter what he did, it failed to work properly. Finally, tired, and frustrated, he retired for the night. The dream he remembered the next morning accurately identified his inability to communicate with his receiver. It also depicted his frustration of not being able to complete his project."

If these types of dreams occur often then it is time to do something about the stress and problems in your life. No one can live-in stressed-out states, for long periods, as this can lead to nervous breakdowns, or result in other emotional, physical, or mental disorders. This is the time to take control of all your daily problems and do something to resolve them. You might need to let go of some problematic relationship, or work that is causing you intense suffering. Meditate and try to calm the mind and self. Change your eating habits, participate in a physical training program which can release the emotional charge of problems. Dreams are a manifestation of what we are thinking, feeling and doing. A great deal of inspiration and innovation has come through dreams.

Conclusion

If we follow the process of our dreams and record and analyze them every day, we will begin to see a pattern. That whatever is happening in our life and in the world around us is mirrored in our dreams. Let us say, we are experiencing a certain

issue or situation and we are unable to resolve it. What happens is that it stays in our minds and is reflected in our dreams and then our subconscious connects with the universal energy or God connection, which reveals possible solutions in our dreams through symbols, visions, or direct revelations. Upon analyzing the symbols in dreams that most affect us, we can find a possible solution.

In a nutshell, we can safely presume that our reality is affected by our dreams and vice versa- Our dreams are affected by our reality. All matter, all consciousness can dream. The state of dreaming is likened to the state of death. When we are sleeping it is like being dead to this world. When we sleep, we dream and awaken in the dream world, which is like the afterlife existence. Raymond A. Moody, Jr., M.D says in his book, "Reflections on Life After Life", that,

" Several people have told me that during their encounter with "death", they got brief glimpses of an entire separate realm of existence in which all knowledge-whether of past, present, or future-seemed to co-exist in a sort of timeless state. Alternately, this has been described as a moment of enlightenment in which the subject seemed to have complete knowledge."

The state of dreaming is like being dead-like, we can safely say that a dream world exists, where knowledge or information is readily available to us, and this other world or afterworld gives us different forms of communicating. Truths are revealed in the form of symbols, sights, sounds, smells, objects, etc. All that can activate a different way of knowing once you begin to analyze it. Raymond A. Moody further says in "Reflections on Life After Life", "...this is a place where the place is knowledge.... knowledge and information are readily available-all knowledge.... you absorb knowledge.... you suddenly know the answers...."

By following our everyday dreams, we can begin to see the hidden aspects within us. We can begin to see who we really are. This is a way to the unfoldment of our true selves. The unfoldment of the self requires a peeling of the layers that we have built around us, covering our true self. By examining our dreams, we can glimpse where we stand as a soul. We can view what we are thinking, and feeling, more objectively and then take the steps necessary to bring changes in our life.

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Holistic Life Concepts of Inner Transformation

“This is love to fly toward a secret sky to cause a hundred veils to fall each moment. First to let go of life. Finally, to take a step without feet.” Rumi

“The most important thing that Jesus taught- learning to love ourselves and others, to forgive, and to pray and give thanks to the Creator-are just as important today as they were 2000 years ago.” Richard Gerber, Vibrational Medicine: New Choices for Healing Ourselves

Elizabeth Clare Prophet relates a story in her book "The Story of Your Soul, Recovering The Pearl of Your True Identity, ""Imagine you are a prince. One day your parents, the king and queen, send you on a mission to a distant land. You must find a pearl guarded by a hungry dragon. You take off your royal robe and leave the kingdom of your parents. You journey to this distant land, putting on dirty clothing and disguising yourself as one of her people. Somehow the people of this land discover that you are a foreigner. They give you food that makes you forget your royal birth and makes you believe that you are one of them. You sink into a deep sleep.

Your parents see your plight and send you a letter that tells you to awaken. It reminds you of your quest to recover the pearl. You remember who you are, a child of kings. You quickly subdue the dragon, retrieve the pearl, and depart, leaving the dirty clothing behind When you return to your native land, you see your royal robe, which reminds you of the splendor you lived in before. The garment speaks to you, telling you that it belongs to the one who is stronger than all human beings. You put on your royal robe once more and return to your father's palace. Within this story about the quest for a pearl lies the elusive answer to the perennial questions Who am I? Why am I here? Where am I going? Based on a divinely inspired Gnostic poem called "The Hymn of the Pearl," this story is an allegory for the profound mystery of your soul's journey from her first abode down to earth and back again. It is the story of the soul who descends from the spiritual realms into the earthly planes of illusion and loses the memory of her origin. She faces the trials and tribulations of the lower life until she responds to the call from Home—the call that leads to her ascent and culminates in union with her God. "

Prophet goes on to describe that the soul of an individual is feminine in relation to the masculine, or spirit, portion of being. "The soul is therefore often referred to as "she. I believe this to be the story of your soul journeying out from the highest point of consciousness to these planes here below and then returning with the pearl. The pearl represents your soul's knowledge of her identity. Retrieving the pearl and bringing it Home symbolizes her integration with her identity, her Higher Self."

As we move through life we get marred by life's disappointments, traumas, and tragedies. Gradually our light begins to diminish, and our soul begins to get fragmented, which leads to blockages in our life force and our psyche. We are unable to connect back to our source and anger grief sadness, low self-esteem

and selfishness begin to take over. Thus, our light, our energy becomes distorted with all the negativity we face each day. We begin to believe that we are not worthy enough, not good enough to connect to God. We lose our self-respect and souls to keep itself sane and intact creates other sub-personalities to make up for what we lost. Our Soul journey becomes shadowed with our negative aspects, and we remain stuck in our lower vibrational states of being. We become what we think we are. It is time to realize and awaken to what we have unknowingly done to ourselves by

accepting the lower negatives aspects of our being and becoming shadowed with darkness.

What Is the Shadow

Transforming our inner(spiritual) self is a difficult thing to do, but it can be done. Our Inner self is who we truly are, it is our spiritual self. It is molded by our inner thoughts and emotions. Our inner self is understood as our personality and core values, belief systems and life experiences, and is composed of both light and dark elements. That is, we have the ability to be good as well as bad. This is our dualistic nature, which shows up in our daily lives, under many guises, depending on the different situations that we are experiencing. If someone is nice and courteous, we respond nicely also. But if someone is mean to you, then you respond in a similar manner. This is our human nature and our experiences with others build up our inner self. An important aspect of our inner self is the shadow part of ourselves. Jessica Cross says in her book, "The Shadow Work Journal", that the shadow is the part of yourself that you have been ignoring, it is a part of you that you don't acknowledge. Often as children we might learn that we need to behave in a certain way to be accepted. We, therefore, unconsciously push aside any parts of ourselves that don't fit our model of acceptance. The shadow part of ourselves holds all of our fears, hatreds, mistakes, anxieties and our negative aspects. It wants everything that you were never allowed to do.

The book "Subpersonalities: The People Inside Us" by John Rowan, states that the concept of sub-personalities which are the thoughts, feelings, and even sensations of the body which are capable of acting as a complete person for short or long periods of time. These various aspects of your personalities were developed as reactions to various event in your life. And are a natural process of soul growth and development." The shadow is the dark side of our human nature, for which we must take responsibility. Carl Jung has explained the shadow as the accumulation of all disowned aspects of ourselves, that has been rejected by the ego. In short, the Shadow is all parts of the personality that the ego didn't accept.

The Ego

What then is the ego? The ego is considered a hindrance in all spiritual traditions. Yet we cannot escape it either. The ego is a necessary and a vital aspect of being human. In our early years we build our ego. The ego is built on the important part of our consciousness which is molded by our daily habits and beliefs. This learning stems from our early socialization which determines out mental and emotional structures of being. Arno Ilgner in his book, "The Rock Warrior's Way: Mental Training for Climbers," explains that,

" You can feel pretty worthless because reward and punishment have molded you. When you did something that was considered good by your caregivers, you were rewarded, and when you did something that was considered bad, you were punished. Your caregivers associated your worth with your performance-your behavior. Then as you grew older, your caregivers' expectations become embodied

in the Ego, which took over the job of rewarding and punishing. Your caregivers' expectations were supplemented or replaced by the expectations of a peer group, or the expectations established by a set of beliefs you adopted with little critical thinking."

He goes on to further elaborate that, regardless of our earlier expectations of the ego, we are dependent on external validation and influences, rather than being in control of our internal based mental and emotional environments. Ilgner says that "We generally have adopted established beliefs rather than formulating our own." He talks about how our society encourages these types of behavior in our everyday personal and professional life. He says in the same book, that, "We may be competitive or compassionate, radical or politically correct, sport climbers or trad climbers. These orientations too often derive from a deep unconscious attempt to align ourselves with people we admire or to get others to like or admire us. Though we may hold these beliefs close to our hearts, they do not come from our hearts. They come instead from that insidious mental monster called the Ego. The ego is a mental entity, a crude and ruthless ghost masquerading as "self." It is a mental construct, produced by socialization, which rewards and punishes us with feelings of self-worth."

One needs to break free from old thinking patterns and perceptions to become liberated from the ego. The Ego is clever and never ceases to keep us in his control, through his many guises and justifications for every situation. Ilgner says that to break free from the ego one would need to take its power and replace it with the higher self. Our higher self isn't competitive, nor does it compare itself with others. Ilgner explains in "The Rock Warrior's Way," that, "The higher self isn't competitive, defensive, or conniving, as the Ego is. It sees through such petty ploys. The higher self, derives self-worth from an internal focus that is based on valuing growth and learning." He explains that gradually one can begin to replace their behaviors, thoughts, and perceptions from the ego-based to the highly evolved guidance of their higher self.

The more balanced and healthy our ego is, the more balanced and harmonious our lives will be. This involves our self-esteem and confidence levels. If our ego is balanced between the light and dark aspects of ourselves, we will have a healthy level of confidence and self-esteem. If the ego is not in balance, then it will show up in our personality as low self-esteem and confidence levels.

However, as we grow older and wiser, we come upon our spirituality, and we find that the ego begins to take second place to our true nature. Once we have reached completion of gaining a degree, career, marriage, children then we begin to view our ego as not so important. We then begin to feel the pangs of spiritual unfulfillment. We long to find something that fulfills our spiritual needs. Here the ego begins to take second place, and the process of letting go of aspects of the ego that are not so important anymore is initiated. Then we begin to experience a struggle between our ego and true nature, which reveals the rejected parts, the sub-personalities. The shadow aspects come out and express themselves.

As we know the shadow is created when any of our behaviors, thoughts, and feelings don't conform to our belief system or to our social, family environment, that is when we tend to repress them. These repressed emotional, and mental energy creates an entity – shadow which gains more energy and power every time it is denied. The shadow shows up in our negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Some examples of sub-personalities are The Parental, The Powerful, The Vulnerable, The Hero, The Critic, The Perfect, The Arrogant, etc.

Sub-personalities are the cause of inner conflict with most individuals. The various sub-personalities want to be recognized and when they are not acknowledged they go against the true self and others causing conflict. This is why it is essential to work and become aware of the sub-personalities. By working with the shadow selves/sub-personalities we can embrace those denied aspects of ourselves and become whole once again. Shadow work uncovers all those parts that you have disowned, repressed, and rejected. It is the process of exploring your inner darkness and working to connect all parts of yourselves that you have denied and abandoned.

"…innumerable sub-personalities exist in ourselves, and as though they are changing their clothes, they are easily changing their own view of life and their own view of the universe." Satosh Abe, The Rainbow of Happiness

Further to the discussion, Jessica Cross in her book, "The Shadow Work Journal "explains that "often we lose the important parts of ourselves, and those parts may act out in order to get attention. Have you ever had an angry outburst or a crying jag that was out of proportion to the situation? That is usually your shadow trying to get your attention. Accessing your shadow can feel scary but remember, it is already part of you, and often a part that needs healing in order to rejoin you as a supportive part of your psyche. Reaching for the shadow is an important process if we are going to become the whole adult we want to be. We want to choose who we are, not have it dictated by someone else. Often our shadow aspects are just scared children who need a hug. They need to be appreciated for how they tried to help us grow up, and they need to know that they can come out and will be heard and supported. The shadow will rear its head regardless of whether you acknowledge it or not. Would you rather put your arms around your shadow and tell it you understand, or have it periodically taken over your body or prevent you from accessing some parts of your talent and abilities? Don't fear your shadow…"

It is notable that there is no thing as a perfect personality-It is quite impossible to attain. Rather we can only strive to perfect our faults and become better every day. Only our higher self is perfect, as it does not have a human personality. At certain times in our lives, we see different aspects of our personality. Some parts of our personality are very likeable while other parts may not be so nice. Each individual has this experience of different personalities stemming from the dualistic nature of light and dark aspects of ourselves. You will find this evident, even in those who seem to have a perfect personality. That is to say that even those with perfect personalities have a dark side to them which manifests itself in passive ways. They have learned to control and overcome their lower or dark side.

For those who have not yet learned to accept their darker aspects, need to integrate them into their light side (into themselves) through the process of becoming aware of the shadow (dark aspect of personality) and accepting that part of themselves with love. This can be done through meditation and shadow work.

Carl Jung is famous for formulating the concept of the shadow, the portion of our personality which through the course of our life is demoted to the dark side of our consciousness. In the book "Eliminating the Shadow", Carl Jung explains how the shadow goes by many familiar names such as the disowned self, the lower self, the dark twin, or brother in the bible, and myth, the double, the repressed self, the alter ego, id, subpersonalities. When we come face to face with our darker side, we use metaphors to describe these encounters: meeting our demons, wrestling with the devil, descent to the underworld, dark night of the soul, midlife crisis. In the book," Eliminating the Shadow, the authors give an example of the shadow, quoting Carl Jung from, "Psychology and Religion".

"In 1886, before Jung made his mark, Robert Louis Stevenson created the now famous story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In his story Dr. Jekyll represents the respectable part of one's personality, but when he transforms using drugs like Heroin, Alcohol, and DMT, into Mr. Hyde, his dark shadow personality gains dominance over him and wreaks havoc on his life. Although the shadow is an innate part of the human being, the vast majority of us are willfully blind regarding its existence. We hide our negative qualities, not only from others but from ourselves. To do this we often criticize and condemn others for ensuring our focus does not fall on our faults and destructive tendencies. We go through life with a false air of moral superiority and a belief that while others act immorally and destructively, we are wholly virtuous and always in the right. Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that man is, overall, less good than he imagines himself or wants to be. Everyone carries a shadow, and the less it is embodied in the individual 's consciousness life, the more blocked and denser it is. At all counts, it forms an unconscious snag, thwarting our most well-meant intentions.

Some aspects of our shadow are the product of our evolution. We contain, like all animals, instincts of sex and aggression that we tend to repress to adapt to the social mores of the day. Some aspects of our shadow are the product of our upbringing. Personality traits, stuck inner children, and impulses that elicited fear or anxiety in our parents or teachers, for example, caused them to punish or criticize us; and so, we react by repressing these characteristics. We put up psychological defenses to ensure they were not allowed expressions, and thus these characteristics were repressed into the unconscious. As all humans have a shadow, what differentiates us from others is the degree to which we are conscious of it. When our shadow remains unconscious, it wreaks havoc in our life."

When one becomes conscious of their shadow, they can begin to heal themselves. On the website [https://highexistence.com/carl-jung-shadow-guide-unconscious/ ,](https://highexistence.com/carl-jung-shadow-guide-unconscious/) Carl Jung says that, "Filling the conscious mind with ideal conceptions is a characteristic of Western theosophy, but not the confrontation with the shadow self and the world of darkness. One does not become enlightened by imagining

figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. "Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life, and you will call it fate."

The same website further explains the process of healing the shadow. Jung has proposed the process of "shadow work, "as a solution to healing the shadow within. What we repress never stays repressed, it lives on in the unconscious, regardless of what our egos would have us believe, the unconscious mind is the one in charge of us. Carl Jung in his "The Philosophical Tree," describes how Shadow work, is the process of making the unconscious conscious. By doing this we gain awareness of our unconscious impulses and can then choose a course of action on how to act on them. We become aware of our behaviors and come to the realization of what is happening within us.

When we observe ourselves reacting to psychological triggers, or events that prompt an instant and uncontrolled reaction from us, we must learn to pause and ask ourselves, "Why am I reacting this way?" This will enable us to check the source of our emotional programming and belief system that is keeping the shadow alive. By Identifying triggers, we usually acknowledge the shadow self. This confirms that we have a capacity for the dark side as well as the good side. Once we identify our dark behaviors, we can begin to correct them. This is an important aspect of becoming an emotionally healthy and enlightened individual. When you are faced with a challenging situation, ask yourself "How will love respond?"

In a nutshell, by recognizing the sources of our triggers, which come in the form of fear, pain, aggression, etc., then can we begin to heal and integrate those wounded parts of ourselves. The website, https://highexistence.com/carl-jung-shadow-guide-unconscious/ describes the process of Integration; "...in Jung's definition, it means that we cease rejecting parts of our personalities and find ways to bring them forward into our everyday lives. ***We accept our shadows*** *and seek to unlock the wisdom they contain. Fear becomes an opportunity for courage. Pain is a catalyst for strength and resilience. Aggression is transmuted into warrior-like passion. This wisdom informs our actions, our decisions, and our interactions with others. We understand how others feel and respond to them with compassion, knowing that they are being triggered by themselves.*

One aspect of integrating the shadow self is healing our psychological wounds from early childhood and beyond. As we embark on this work, we begin to understand that much of our shadow is the result of being hurt and trying to protect ourselves from re-experiencing that hurt. We can accept what happened to us, acknowledge that we did not deserve the hurt and that these things were not our fault, and reclaim those lost pieces to move back into wholeness. (For deep traumas, it is advised to work with a trained psychologist on these issues.) "

The shadow is likened to a child that acts out like a disobedient, misbehaved child, until all aspects of the personality are acknowledged and integrated. It is only through this integration of our sub-personalities that true wholeness can become possible. That is enlightenment.

Working with Our Shadow-Self

Our stored emotions, our psychological anxieties and many healing therapies focus on getting in touch with deep, traumatic emotions stored in our cells. Jessica Cross says in "The Shadow Work Journal", that some aspects of the shadow are caused by traumatic events, and we may learn some lessons that are very hard to undo, because our brain may have learned that it is very unsafe to try to access these parts of our shadow. Cross says in the same book that, "We all learn these lessons while figuring out how to function in this world as children; in loving and not so loving families, from friends, teachers, extended families, books, television, really anything that happens to touch and resonate in our young and malleable brains." Even as adults, we can form shadows, but we are able to deal with them better than those who have formed shadows in their childhood. We can heal the shadow within by accepting and embracing it. Some ancient cultures do shadow work by focusing on retrieving pieces of your soul to become whole again. This they do through meditation exercises, journaling, drawing that help them to find and accept their denied parts.

"If left unopened, the shadow is a Pandora's box filled with secrets that we fear will destroy everything, we love and care about. But if we open the box, we discover that what's inside has the power to radically and positively alter our lives." Deepak Chopra and Marianne Williamson, The Shadow Effect

Techniques to Integrate the Shadow

- *One way to accept the shadow is by writing in a Journal, all of your feeling, anxieties, likes, dislikes, hatreds, obsessions, reactions, etc. about certain events, people, and places. This will help you to identify the source of your shadow. You can also write down all your feelings, hates, desires and once you have poured your heart out. You can either burn the paper or rip it into a million pieces. This will help purge dark emotions. The book "Shadow Work Journal," by Jessica Cross gives the readers some meditations to help recognize different aspect of the shadow.*

- *Drawing the shadow is another technique to analyze the shadow. The drawing should be spontaneous and free flowing. By drawing you recognize the unconscious and make it conscious. You can use color to highlight different aspects of the image, which later you can interpret using color and symbol meanings. You will see your inner self will be reflected in the drawing.*

- *Another way to become aware of the shadow self is by looking at the emotional triggers that cause the sub-personality to emerge and express itself. i.e., what caused the emotional outburst? This is where you need healing. Ask yourself what and why are you feeling this way? Write it down in*

a journal. Then accept your emotional outbursts and forgive yourself and the other party for it, without any judgement. Keep practicing this exercise and keep loving yourself unconditionally.

- *Yet another way to heal the shadow is going on a mystical/spiritual journey or making a pilgrimage to a holy sacred place. The spiritual journey will begin to purge negative emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. We let go of the things that are creating stagnant energy with us. You choose a destination (Holy or Scared Place). There we will be able to quiet our mind and through meditation and prayer, we are able to overcome our negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and create a place of illumination (enlightenment) within our hearts. Love all parts of yourself and accept them. Here many will find insights into their problems. New creativity is born. Keep your heart, mind, body, and soul open to receive whatever is given to you. Here is when you will be transforming the energies of your inner self. The last stage of the journey requires returning back to your world, yourself, your life with your new insights, your creativity which has been reborn again. This is the completion of your self-healing journey and your self-transformation at this stage of your life. You bring yourself, and the learning to serve the world, yourself, and your life in an active, conscious, and rejuvenated way. Some examples of spiritual journeys are pilgrimage to holy places or sacred lands, walking the labyrinth, walking meditation. Anything that you deem sacred, and that brings peace to you.*

In the book, "Inner Work," Robert Johnson describes Carl Jung's description of how the unconscious works. He explains that the unconscious continually emits a stream of energetic impulses that find their way to the conscious mind in the form of feelings, moods and most of all, the images that appear in the mind and imagination. Johnson goes on to further say that dreaming and imagination are both the playground for the unconscious. They both have the ability to transform the unconscious, invisible streams of energy into comprehensible images, even if it seems irrational.

The goal for shadow work is to open the path of the unconscious and let the sub-personalities come out and express themselves in whatever form they choose. This includes writing, journaling, and drawing. If the process becomes too intense it is recommended to work with a professional licensed practitioner. People who have experienced serious mental and physical trauma seem to develop serious psychological cases and need professional help from a licensed psychologist. These cases should be referred to a licensed practitioner, and these types of serious cases are beyond the sphere of this course which deal with spiritual coaching and counseling. In "Inner Work," Robert Johnson states that, "We confront powerful personalities who live inside at the unconscious level. Who we are is so often in conflict with our conscious ideas and behaviors. We enter into the dynamics of the unconscious. We travel into a region where the unconscious mind does not know how to go." We can try to help ourselves by doing the following:

- *One can initiate a conversation with the sub-personalities, asking who they are, what they want where they came from. What they want from us.*

- *We can work towards creating a positive mindset of the sub-personality experience. To acknowledge that we are different people at different times and that there is nothing wrong with that. For example, you are having an argument with your spouse, and you get an important phone call from your work. It's your manager. You instantly change your personality; your voice tone changes from argumentative to a professional and more likeable one. This is perfectly normal and acceptable. We are different people at different times and in different situations. So, accept yourself as you are with your faults and start transforming the aspects that you don't like about yourself. Know that each sub-personality has a purpose, a unique way of looking at the world and serves a useful purpose in your life. Such as an angry outburst whenever, someone is trying to hurt you or harm you in any way, is actually a sub-personality that might be trying to enforce your personal boundaries or protect you in some way. If you have a melancholy, sad, depressed personality this indicates a form of compassion to compensate for your suffering or for a need that is not being met. To heal our inner self, we would need to give the sub-personality what it has been denied, or what is lacking. Accept, Forgive and Move on.*

  "Rejecting a subpersonality doesn't kill it-it will simply go underground and then it will get you from there. The good news is that you can get to know them, heal them, control them, negotiate with them, and make friends with them. So, embracing, compassion, listening, finding out what they need, parenting and above all accepting, are the keys to a successful explanation of this world." Adrian Longstaffe, "Notes on Subpersonalities"

- *Other techniques to heal the shadow include yoga, tai chi, regular massage, sound healing, crystal healing, reiki. Massage in various ways help release blocked emotions and energy. It gets your chi moving. Sound Healing, and crystal healing, also releases blocked emotions and thinking patterns, through alleviated states of vibrational energy. Reiki is an ancient form of energy healing that moves old patterns of thinking and feeling. Yoga and tai chi are known as moving mediation that helps to relieve the tension of the body through the release of stagnant energy.*

Healing our inner selves is a continual process, and requires great diligence, self-acceptance, and unconditional love for ourselves. It requires that we allow ourselves to forgive and be forgiven and live a life of love and gratitude. The act of love conquers all darkness.

Meditation for Recognizing Sub-Personalities

- *Close your eyes and relax in a quiet place. Take one attitude, motive that you consistently use, or an issue that continually bothers you. Allow an image to form. The image could be anything a man, woman, object, animal, plant, symbol, etc. Don't try to stop the image from emerging. Observe what it does, Get a feel of the image. Now let the image express itself with inner dialogue. Get to know this image of yourself. When it is done, then record your findings and your assumptions, including thoughts and emotions you felt, the colors, sounds etc. You can give the sub-personalities a name such as The Boss, if it acts bossy, The Queen, The Bitch, The Complainer, The Judge. Describe it thoroughly. Work on it till you can't anymore, then move onto the next one. Follow the same procedure. Spend 1-2 weeks on each sub-personality without judging yourself.*

The website http://www.interactive-consultancies.co.uk/assets/pdf/subpersonality_notes.pdf, describes how sub-personalities can be categorized:" There are all sorts of ways in which people have conceptualized and arranged the possible universe of subpersonalities. I like to look at them in terms of groups.

Firstly, and probably most importantly, there is what I call the defense group. This consists of the subpersonalities which have developed to protect the very vulnerable and powerless person that entered this world. Probably the most significant member of this group is the protector/controller. This is the bit of us that keeps us safe. That stops us getting into scrapes or into danger. One problem with this is that this subpersonality developed very early, before we developed or our adult coping skills.

Now, in keeping us safe, this part of us might restrict us in ways which are no longer useful. Because of its power, we need to negotiate very respectfully with this subpersonality. In a workshop, I will always start by having a dialogue with the protector/controller. Other powerful members of this group might be the critic, the perfectionist, and the driver. Next comes the role group. These subpersonalities are associated with the roles that we fulfil in our lives. The boss, the mother, the father, the organizer etc. The next group might be called the age-related group. These include our inner children but also the wise man, the wise woman. There is, of course a gender group -- what we might call inner male and inner female -- what Jung terms the animus and anima.

Next comes the introjected group. These are bits of other people or even bits of our culture that we have internalized (or had forced on us) without much opportunity to make them our own. The abusive father is one example of this group but cultural attitudes like racial prejudice can also generate subpersonalities which we take on from outside in an uncritical (and often unconscious) way. There is another group we could call the trauma group. These often arise as a result of circumstances in which we have experienced damage or harm. Some of these subpersonalities are the victim, the bully, the punishing parent, the demon, the manipulator, Mr. angry etc. Then there is group which we could call the nurturing/healing group. These often include subpersonalities

which we consciously develop as we start along the path of personal development. The internalized good father, the good mother, the wise and loving being. Some of these groups might be experienced as spiritual or transpersonal. Certainly, my "workshop leader" is a collaboration between my internal good father and my Senex or wise man."

As a seeker of spiritual truths, we all move to perfect our faults and this is the start of our inner transformation, to make ourselves whole. These sub-personalities were created for a reason. To protect and help us cope with and survive in the world around us. Psychologists affirm that sub-personalities allow us to experience different aspects of life and consciousness. Every day we should strive to better ourselves. The process of inner transformation takes time to become a part of our innate nature, but as you gradually begin to focus on these important elements of change, you can eventually succeed. The elements are as follows:

Forgiveness:

The concept of forgiveness is so profound that it can change our whole life. The forgiveness that I am talking about goes beyond the original concept of forgiveness. It's the concept that includes everything in our life to the minuscule detail. An article, "The Importance of Forgiveness – The Good Men Project," from the website, https://www.goodmenproject.com/featured-content/the-importance-of-forgiveness, states that.

> *"Forgiveness is for one's own growth and happiness. When we hold on to hurt, pain, resentment and anger it harms us, far more than it harms the offender. Forgiveness frees us to live in the present, Forgiveness allows us to move on without anger or contempt or seeking revenge."*

Forgiveness leads us to free ourselves from the burden of karma, and releases' our soul from the bondage of our mistakes. The word Karma is defined in the Free Dictionary from the website www.thefreedictionary.com/karma, as, "Fate or destiny resulting from one's previous actions."

Wikipedia on its' website https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/karma, describes Karma originating from the ancient language of Sanskrit and says that karma, "means action, work or deed; it also refers to intent and actions of an individual (cause) influences the future of that individual (effect). Good intent and good deeds contribute to good karma and happier rebirths, while bad intent and bad deeds contribute to bad karma and bad rebirths."

Simply put, Karma is the law of sow and reap, whatever one sets in motion by their good or bad action. If one does a good deed, it will create positive effects. Whereas, if one does a bad deed, it will create a negative effect, which in turn will

create a cycle of bondage to that bad deed – till it is resolved or retributed in some positive way. For example, if you are demeaning to someone that person will not like you either. Then again when you see them, you are demeaning to them in some way, they will retaliate and be mean/demeaning back to you.

It's a small act but a cycle of karma will be created, by the negative thoughts and actions of the individuals involved. The cycle will only break when one of them will stop being demeaning and apologizes. In addition, the karmic cycle will fully break when both individuals realize their mistakes, ask for forgiveness, then forgive and let go. Once this happens, your psyche automatically lets' go, and the event becomes a memory- that is you stop putting energy into it. Every time you think of something you put energy into it. You give it power.

Thoughts and emotions are real things, the more energy you give them by thinking and feeling about it, the more powerful they become. Remember thought follows energy. Elizabeth Clare Prophet says in "The Story of Your Soul," that the "… The law of karma is a universal law of cause and effect that affects everyone. As Newton's third law of motion states, "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." To put it in simple terms: What goes around comes around. Whatever you do comes full circle to your doorstep for resolution.

The law of karma is inseparable from life on earth. Almost everything we do is setting something in motion that is going to have ramifications. An idle word, a careless remark can affect someone for a day or a week. We have set up a cause; it is in motion. Likewise, we can bring joy and comfort, learning, or a nugget of truth that gives someone a burst of awareness. These are also causes we've set in motion by our free will—causes that will ripple on and affect others. So, we begin to see that we are absolutely responsible for what we think, feel, say and do—or don't do."

Elizabeth Clare Prophet goes on to describe the process of living with karma. She says in the same book that, "Every morning the bundle of karma we have been assigned for the day greets us at our doorstep. We are allotted a portion of good karma based on the love, comfort, and enlightenment we have extended to life in the past. Likewise, a certain portion of our negative karma also arrives for resolution. Good karma can manifest as anything from a supportive circle of family and friends to geniuses, aptitudes, and talents. Our positive karma and momentum can even launch us like a rocket ship on the pathway of our soul's mission. Negative karma can manifest as anything from destructive habit patterns to disease, accidents, or difficult relationships.

When negative karma descends, we have a choice. We can either follow the tendency of our karma and our past, or we can challenge it. We can say, "I am not the victim of my stars, my fate, or my karma. I am a new being. And on this day I determine that I will be all-love in action. If I hated my neighbor yesterday, I would love my neighbor today. This is my free will, and I choose to change my course for a victory in this life." According to Western thinking, pleasure is good, and pain is bad. Experiencing the return of negative karma is sometimes painful, but pain can be a

teacher, a purifier. Pain is necessary at our level of development—it teaches us to eliminate the causes of pain and to set in motion causes of bliss on the path to our reunion with God. Balancing karma is a joyous path because you are paying your karmic debts fully and finally."

Resolving our karmic debt requires that we learn how to live-in forgiveness. Forgiveness is an important aspect of our inner map of transformation and soul development. Our inner world is reflected to our outer world. To make positive changes and heal our outer world, we need to heal and change our inner concepts and validations. Sometimes to create a new life for ourselves we need to let go of the old concepts that are holding us back, they can only be released if its karma is released. This can only happen when we learn to forgive graciously and freely.

Sometimes we might have to go beyond our original concept of forgiveness and grasp expanded forgiveness, which includes everything in life that disturbs our harmonious state of being. Elizabeth Clare Prophet says in The Story of Your Soul, that, "Forgive your friends, your enemies and all who have ever wronged you. When you send love and forgiveness to others, you are bringing resolution. You're also doing something for yourself, you're freeing yourself from entanglements of this and previous lives. Look at the people you are tied to today. Look at your situation with your job, your family, your friends, along with everything that affects you.

Most of us have difficult people in our lives. Sometimes we can't seem to resolve things with them and to disentangle ourselves from them. Often, it's because we've never forgiven old hurts and old wrongs, some from previous embodiments, so they hang on. And non-forgiveness, which is the hardness of heart, binds us so tightly to people that we never seem to get out of the wrangle, the arguments, and the problems. Therefore, forgive and forget, and move on. Bless life and be free. The greatest liberation I have achieved in this life is the ability to forgive all people profoundly, deeply and with the totality of my being. It is even possible to forgive those who have committed heinous crimes."

From personal experience I can truly say that forgiving others is not any easy task but to lead to a transformation of our inner self, the concept of forgiveness must encompass all those things that disturb the tranquility of the soul. You must forgive injustices done to you by others, those who have hurt you physically, mentally, emotionally, and verbally. Even simple things like:

- *A noisy neighbor requires forgiving as they disturbed your peace of mind.*
- *Forgive the barking dog that robs you of your sleep.*
- *Forgive the naughty child.*
- *Forgive the crowd in the mall.*
- *Forgive the long wait at the doctor.*
- *Forgive disappointment, rude remark.*
- *Forgive a rude neighbor, colleague*
- *Etc.*

Elizabeth Clare Prophet says in the same book that "It's not easy to forgive those who have committed crimes against the soul, the mind, the body. So, what is the appropriate response to the evildoer?" She goes on to explain a very simple technique "....First, we invoke divine mercy and forgive the soul of the one who committed the wrong, and we also ask God to forgive that soul. Second, we invoke divine justice for the binding of the not-self of the wrongdoer. We also ask God to give the soul the opportunity to repent of her deeds and to strengthen herself so she can resist the urge to do wrong when it knocks again at her door.

Engaging in this process can help us forgive even those whom we have the hardest time forgiving. Each night as we lay our bodies down to sleep, it's the end of a cycle and we have a chance to forgive. It's our time to let go of all discord, all problems and to forgive every part of life. We want to turn the page of the day and for it to be finished and resolved. So, we practice forgiveness every day, every night. And as we do, we are taking firm steps toward our goal. For little by little as we work through our emotions (including our anger), forgive ourselves, forgive others and come to resolution, portions of ourselves are daily becoming part of our Higher Self, our Real Self."

Such forgiveness must be practiced daily and with sincerity, and when this has become a daily and comfortable habit, then the next truth can be put in action.

"In the presence of God, nothing stands between Him and us— we are forgiven. But we cannot feel His presence if anything is allowed to stand between ourselves and others." — DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

***Respect**:*

The second important element of Inner transformation is respect for all life and do no harm attitude, with do right. "All life deserves respect, dignity, and compassion." Anthony Douglas Williams, Inside the Divine Pattern

> *"Any society which does not insist upon respect for all life must necessarily decay." Albert Einstein*

Respect has many aspects to it, some of which are as follows:

- *Self-Respect means giving value to oneself – Holding yourself with honor and dignity. This means doing / speaking your truths with honor and dignity, without degrading yourself. This concept also includes first and foremost to take care of yourself and your physical and emotional needs. When you are at peace with yourself, then you can give the best of*

yourself to others. If you can't love and respect yourself first, how can you love and respect others.

- *Furthermore, don't allow others to treat you badly, and with disrespect. This includes don't allow others such as family members, spouse, friends, colleague, and others around you to take advantage of you. Here is where you need to set up healthy boundaries. Be courteous, friendly, helpful but to a limit. No one can be the martyr all the time. When you show respect for yourself, it will reflect in your outer demeanor and people will respect you.*

- *An important aspect of Self-Respect is to hold yourself worthy of being treated well, and that you deserve all the good things in life, just like anyone else. If someone treats you unfairly or talks to you in a demeaning way. It is your duty to tell them so, in a firm, assertive manner.*

- *Respect for Others include simple things such as, respecting other's boundaries, by respecting others' rights to be themselves and you do not attempt to control or change them in word or action. You should not give unsolicited advice to other adults. You respect the human right of free-will, to run their own lives as they see fit, so long as it does not adversely affect the life of others. Respect others' opinions, and listen to them attentively, and letting them speak. For example, If you are in a relationship with someone, it is important to maintain a healthy respectful nature between each other. Your partner should respect you and vice versa. All types of relationships should be based and built on Respect. This includes*
  colleagues, family, parents, friends, neighbors, bosses etc. All relationships should be based on equal respect for each other.

"Let us develop respect for all living things. Let us try to replace violence and intolerance with understanding and compassion and love. Jane Goodall

- *Respect for the Environment includes not abusing the land, trees, oceans, and places around us. Cultivate enough to feed on and let the land rest and replenish itself. Don't cut trees needlessly. Don't pollute the water with toxic materials. Reduce your food waste, reduce the use of plastics. Recycle items that can be recycled. Reduce your geographic footprint. I know some of these things might be a hassle for some, but if everyone does their share, bit by bit we can make the world a better place for us and our future generations. Just by conscious awareness, and caring we create a synergy of transformation within us- this is doing no harm and doing right, which leads to the right living. In addition, Respect for all life in simpler terms also means do no harm to all and everything around you. That is the best we can do; we strive to become perfect every day. To remain spiritually pure, we must understand our place in creation. It*

means to be respecter of all people, of all life, of everything the creator created. An example of this is,

- *Let the other person pass in peace. That is let them live in peace. Don't direct the rivers course.*
- *Cultivate enough to eat, then let the earth rest.*
- *Steal not, lie not, kill not*
- *Be faithful, and loyal to your spouse, family, and friends.*
- *Honor nature and her bounties.*

Accepting Yourself as You Are Right Now:

Another important point that is essential for Inner Transformation is self-acceptance of ourselves and situations, so we can move on from our current state. Accept yourself unconditionally, you are perfect, you are divine. We are all created from the Divine Essence of God; therefore, we are all divine and perfect as we are and strive to become better every day. Remember to affirm acceptance by saying,

"I accept myself just the way I am right here and right now, including any so-called faults of mine. I work on myself every day to be better than I was yesterday. I choose to feel good about myself, and who I am becoming every day. I routinely pat myself on the back for my daily victories. I am entitled to the same good things in life as anyone else-no more, no less. I have realistic expectations of myself, and I never take myself too seriously."

Always accept yourself without any conditions or compromise. You are all that you think and believe about yourself. Each one of us has many faults that we would like to improve. That is fine. Begin by accepting yourself as you are and then making the appropriate changes in your life.

In the modern, hi-tech world many people live with anxiety and stress, and on the go lifestyle. This has led our society to live our daily lives shadowed with feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness, leading to low-self-esteem issues. Lack of self-acceptance leads to low self-esteem and low confidence levels within us. This issue is the main source of our problem. If we have good self-esteem and confidence within ourselves, we can tackle any problem that comes our way. To accept oneself unconditionally, it is vital to not take yourself too seriously-which basically means that you are not easily offended, you can laugh at your mistakes, you can let go and forgive easily, you see yourself as you are, and have realistic expectations of yourself.

Accepting yourself also means knowing that you are eligible to the same good things in life as anyone else. You do not need to feel unworthy or make excuses for your inadequacies. For Exp. "I can't do that because..." or "I'm not experienced or educated enough." Instead know that it is your attitude, belief about yourself that stops you. You can always learn a new skill and become experienced. Or take a course or research that specific topic to become more

educated in what you lack. Face the challenge with a positive attitude of "How hard can it be?" rather than "that's too hard!"

Another important aspect of accepting yourself includes adjusting your view of how you look at perfection and mistakes. From the beginning of our life, we work towards perfecting ourselves. We make mistakes and we learn from them. Perfection is an attitude that comes about through experience and wisdom. It is an ongoing process. We are perfect as we can be in any given moment and strive to become better every day.

When you make a mistake, accept the responsibility that is own up to it. Then work towards making amends through the act of forgiveness. Learn the lesson and move on guilt-free. Live your life doing no harm and with the right action, do the best you can and that is all we can do. Another important aspect of accepting yourself unconditionally is to look for inner validation rather than other/outer validation. That is instead of pleasing others, be satisfied with yourself. Most people live on the energy and validation that comes from pleasing others. This is called them-esteem (pleasing them) and is commonly known as low self-esteem. They only feel worthy when they get the approval of others.

Healthy self-esteem is based on when you feel worthy, confident, and satisfied and don't require outside validation for your actions. Another thing is not to have expectations from others. A healthy, self-worth and self-esteem comes from a balanced self-respect, high self-regard, which is based on internal expectations and validations. Remember the adage, "What you think of me is none of my business."

To overcome, low self-esteem and them-esteem issues learn to concentrate on yourself, your expectations and what you want. Instead of what others want from you. It's always good to help others, but not at your own expense. Some sacrifice is fine, but no one can be a martyr all the time, eventually it will (the deprivation) will get to you and become a problem (such as a shadow, sub-personality, etc.). Learn to love yourself, nourish, and give yourself what you need. You deserve the same good things as anyone else. Find a healthy balance between giving of yourself. Be free, self-sufficient in everything and not dependent on anyone else for anything.

Other points to build your self-esteem:

Do not compare yourself to others as this creates them-esteem & jealousy. Jealousy is a selfish act that destroys relationships and causes harm to others. When someone becomes jealous over someone, it is usually because they feel threatened, they will lose if they won't have what the other has. They feel deprived and feel that they have to have what the other has or they won't survive. This causes them to behave in a selfish, mean way. This is a classic case of them-esteem. The jealous person feels that they will gain the approval of others by having the thing that they are jealous of. If you are self-sufficient, you will know that you can get what you want by making your own efforts. If you have healthy self-esteem and high regard

for yourself, which is based on internal expectations, and validations-you will never feel jealous.

Another way where we compare ourselves to others is when we think we are better than others. We are all made from divine energy, and each have our unique expression to manifest. Some people will always be better than us at certain things, while others will always be worse than us at certain things. However, we are all equal and can choose to be who we are, without comparing ourselves to others. Every individual on earth is important otherwise we wouldn't be here.

Avoid negative self-talk and use positive words and affirmations every day to build your self-esteem.

- *Learn to take and give compliments.*
- *Find something to be proud of each day. Pat yourself on the back for doing the right thing or doing something good.*
- *Smile a lot, and remember common courtesies such as 'Thank You,' 'Your Welcome!'*

"Acceptance…is a simple recognition of the truth that this is the way things are in this moment." John Kirkwood, LesleyPyne.co.uk

Responsibility for Yourself & For Your Actions

Accept responsibility for your actions, past, present, and future, learn the lesson and move on. This is no way mean to accept unjust acts, or morally incorrect behaviors, it means if something bad has happened to you, then learn the lessons, resolve the problems in a healthy, logical way and move on. Being responsible for your actions is the foundation upon which your success in life exists. It is imperative to know that you are accountable for all your actions, and choices.

Each individual is responsible for themselves-Accept responsibility for your past by accepting and learning from the consequences of your past mistakes. This means that once we learn the lesson, we also take positive action to correct our past mistakes, and make amends if possible, and then move forward without guilt.

Another important aspect of self-responsibility is to not expect others to do for you which you can and should do for yourself. As a responsible individual do things for yourself, don't burden others unnecessarily. This also includes to, don't do for others that which they could and should do for themselves. This doesn't mean don't do things for others, rather it means not to make others dependent on your help that they start taking advantage of you. Exp. You should not perform routine chores and tasks for someone who should and could do it themselves.

Everybody needs to do their share. It is fine to help out when someone needs it, but it becomes a unhealthy codependence when it is done often. In the professional and business side, always complete a project, don't set out to do what you can't complete. Make realistic goals and take responsibility for their complete action.

Gratitude

"The unthankful heart discovers no mercies; but the thankful heart will find in every hour, some heavenly blessings." -Henry Ward Beecher

Gratitude is a strong appreciation for a good action, it is a state of thankfulness and gratefulness. Fear, anger, bitterness, mistrust, hatred, envy, jealousy, these block the inner light that we are born with. We are all born believing, as we grow and experience life, our inner lights begin to dim, a disappointment, a hurt, begins to mark us. Evil takes the shape of all of life's ills such as sadness, grief, anger, pain, hatred, the desire for revenge, the harassment of others etc. That is when we forget to be grateful for what we still have.

When we are in a state of gratitude, we overcome our inner fears, sadness, anger, and griefs, then we open the doors to let the light in, becoming peaceful after a stormy day. Good can be attained through the action of forgiveness, and life's ills and the darkness of evil can be endured by acceptance. An example is, when we accept the loss of a loved one, or a tragedy, disappointments in life, and let it be. It has happened, mourn, and then accept the loss and move on, then all your anger and sadness will melt away and you will become peaceful once again. The website www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/gratitude , defines gratitude as thankfulness or gratefulness. The word gratitude comes from the Latin word gratus, 'pleasing', 'thankful.' It is described as a feeling of appreciation felt by and/or similar positive response shown by the recipient of kindness, gifts, help, favors, or other types of generosity towards the giver of such gifts." The website states that,

"Gratitude is viewed as a prized human propensity in the Christian, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Baha'i and Hindu traditions. Worship with gratitude to God is a common theme in such religions and therefore, the concept of gratitude permeates religious texts, teachings, and traditions. For this reason, it is one of the most common emotions that religions aim to provide and maintain in followers and is regarded as a universal religion sentiment."

The idea of gratitude is found in all religions and cultures throughout the world. It encourages people to be grateful and express thanks to God in all circumstances. The state of gratitude brings joy, peace, and prosperity in one's life, as the Law of Attraction states 'like attracts like.' Research has shown that grateful people are more satisfied with their lives, less stressed, and have better social and personal relationships. In general, they are more enriched, happy, confident and have self-acceptance.
"God is Light: If We live and move in light. There is love between us. Without love the world cannot be at peace; rid our world of hatred and fear. Help husbands and wives to find comfort in sorrow, and strength in trials. Grant them enduring love. Dear God, please keep all the dead in your care, those we have loved and those no one remembers." Anonymous

The process of Inner Transformation requires us to believe that we are not alone in the universe. Even when we are alone, we are not really alone. God is with us always. He is known by many names, God, The Word, The Good, The One, The Most High, The Great Spirit, The World-Soul, The Logos, Allah,Brahman, Supreme, The Higher Power, Tao, Zeus, Jehovah, Ra, many, many more. Perfection and Enlightenment are concepts that are evolving as we evolve. Being enlightened doesn't guarantee continual bliss or perfected human condition.

Rather it means to become aware of something, to become knowledgeable. Know thyself and work with perfecting your faults is the new enlightenment. Being satisfied with who you are and doing right, while doing no harm to others and yourself-This is true enlightenment. Our consciousness is eternal and will live on long after our human form is gone. The thread of the true ancient wisdom runs through all the religions and the sacred teachings of the world.

I Encourage each toward their own belief, faith, and religion. We teach from a Universal Mystical point of view, revealing the common thread between all. There is but only one God, and many paths lead to the One God, and all are true. The thread of the true ancient wisdom runs through all the religions and sacred teachings of the world. We are divine expressions of The Universal Consciousness.

"Dear God, open our path to reveal our invisible spirit roads and guide us to do thy will."
Saiyra Akbar

"O God of the silent places, who hearest our most secret thoughts and dost understand our hidden wants beyond our power to pray, do give each of us what we most deeply need." Earlyne Chaney

Advanced Meditation by Saiyra Akbar & Zhang Lee

Meditation is the act or practice that uses a certain technique to focus the mind on achieving a mentally calm and harmonious state. One learns to concentrate and train their attention and awareness in a relaxed, peaceful state of being. Meditation is the act of thinking, concentrating deeply. It means to ponder, muse, study on a specific point. Further it is the act of relaxing and focusing on one concept for a specific period.

Meditation is practiced in all cultures, in one form or another, and anybody can do it. Meditation is diverse as the number of people who practice it. Jon Kabat-Zinn in his book, "Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindful Meditation in Everyday Life," says that,

"Thinking you are able to meditate is a little like thinking you are unable to breathe, or to concentrate or relax. Pretty much everybody can breathe easily. And under the right circumstances, pretty much anybody can concentrate, anybody can relax."

Meditation has been in existence since time unknown. In this course we will discuss and explore the various types of meditation that can be used in our daily life. Meditation will also enable you to connect with other metaphysical concepts and the Law of Attraction. You will also learn that meditation can be used to enhance your state of mind and thus your whole life.

Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book "Coming to Our Senses: healing Ourselves and The World Through Mindfulness," that the concept of meditation is far different than perceived by many. He says that,

"…meditation is not the throwing off a switch and catapulting yourself to be peaceful or relaxed. It is really an inward gesture that inclines the heart and mind (seen as one seamless whole) toward a full-spectrum awareness of the present moment just as it is, accepting whatever is happening simply because it is already happening."

So, meditation is whatever you want it to be. It can be used for relaxation, or for self – healing, or for personal growth. In the modern world mediation has evolved to become a daily aspect of our life and can be used accordingly (in whichever way you would like to use it). Some ways meditation can be used include

dealing with stress, relaxation, self-improvement, connecting with your higher self, etc.

Starting a Meditation Practice

The first thing to start any meditation practice is to set a goal, as to why you want to meditate. And ask what would you like to achieve? The main goal of meditation is to become aware of the present moment. It is important to realize that depression, stress, worry and anxieties all happen when the mind dwells on the past or the future. A primary goal of mediation is about achieving stillness, amidst the mindless chatter. A moment of peace creates peace and satisfaction within the whole being.

To Meditate

The word meditation comes from the latin word 'meditatio' and French 'meditacioun' which means to ponder, contemplate, or to think. In Christian Catholic tradition meditation is derived from 'meditatio', which is a step-by-step process to achieve stillness of mind. In Greek meditation was known as Theoria, which means to speculate and contemplate.

In Eastern Spiritual traditions it comes from the Sanskrit root 'dhyai', which means to contemplate or meditate. Meditation also refers to the Islamic Sufism practice of Zikr and the Jewish Kabbalah. Meditation is used in all cultures and can be defined as a variety of practices and prayers, thinking deeply, concentrating on the mind for a certain period of time, giving your attention to only one thing, prayer, contemplation, all which lead to a calm and serene state.

Researchers define meditation as the act to engage in mental exercise by focusing on one's breath or repetition of a mantra, sacred word, God's names, which leads to a relaxed state of being and increased spiritual awareness and God/Self-Realization. So, choose an objective, goal, and purpose of your meditation practice.

Meditation has been seen as a tool for self-healing and self-development and is considered as technique to evolving consciousness. This being only when a relaxed state of mind opens the channels of creativity and inspiration. The origin of meditation is found in the Indian and Asian Religions and cultures. The following are the most common faiths that practiced meditation.

Meditation Around the World

Hinduism

In Hindu Traditions meditations is based on Yoga and Dhyana techniques and philosophy. The website What is Dhyana? - Definition from Yogapedia defines Dhyana as," Dhyana is a Sanskrit word meaning "meditation." It is derived from the root words, dhi, meaning "receptacle" or "the mind"; and yana, meaning "moving" or "going." An alternate root word, dhyai, means "to think of." In Hindu traditions that are derived from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, dhyana is a refined meditative practice that requires deep mental concentration. This kind of meditation is taken up only after engaging in preparatory exercises."

The earliest references are found in the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita where it explains when one achieves a calm and relax mental state, one is able to perceive the self (atman). Another important resource on meditation and yoga is Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (c. 400CE). This ancient text describes the eight branches of yoga, which ultimately leads to aloneness and thus to union with God. The Eight Branches of Yoga are considered disciplines that need to be mastered in order to achieve a permanent state of enlightenment. The branches are.

1. *Ethical Disciples (Yamas)*
2. *Rules (Niyamas)*
3. *Physical Postures (Asanas)*
4. *Breath Control (Pranayama)*
5. *Withdrawal From the Senses (Pratyahara)*

6. *One-Pointedness of Mind (Dharana)*
7. *Meditation (Dhyana)*
8. *Union With God (Samadhi)*

Sikhism

The Sikhs practice meditation called Simran, which is the act of feeling the Presence of God and entering divinity. They also believe in doing good deeds to achieve a pure state of spiritual divinity. According to their philosophy, without good deeds one cannot attain the pure states of awareness and divinity. They also believe that one can only meditate when the will of God allows it. One meditation technique is called Nam Japna which is focusing the mental attention on the names and attributes of God.

Buddhism

Ancient traditions all point to the fact that meditation is the basis of the whole religion of Buddhism. This meditation includes the Eight-Fold Noble Path introduced by Gautama Buddha in 5th Century BCE. The goal of meditation is to awaken the sleeping soul and freeing oneself of their karma and attaining Nirvana.

Meditation (Dhayana) is practiced through the controlling of the breath and creating mindfulness. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in "Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life," that, "The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we cultivate mindfulness. Mindfulness means being

awake. It means knowing what you are doing. But when we start to focus in on what our mind is up to, for instance, it is not unusual to quickly go unconscious again, to fall back into an automatic-pilot mode of awareness. These lapses in awareness are frequently caused by an eddy of dissatisfaction with what we are seeing or feeling in that moment, out of which springs a desire for something to be different, for things to change. You can easily observe the mind's habit of escaping from the present moment for yourself. Just try to keep your attention focused on any object for even a short period of time. You will find that to cultivate mindfulness, you may have to be awake and aware. We do this by reminding ourselves to look, to feel, to be. It's that simple…Checking in from moment to moment, sustaining awareness across a stretch of timeless moments, being here, now."

"If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things. This is the best season of your life." Wu-Men

There are many different techniques, such as visualization exercises used to develop mindfulness and concentration. The Buddhist follow different Schools of thought, such as Theravada Sarvastivada and Tibetan traditions, to develop these skills.

From this intense practice of meditation, the two most important qualities emerge.

- *Peace, relaxation, serenity, tranquility which enables mental clarity, composes, unifies, and focuses the mind.*
- *Insight (Vipassana) enables one to see the truth of things.*

Research has shown that when the mind is developed to be at peace, it weakens the five hindrances that block our mental progress. Which are as follows:

1. *Sensory desires which is the seeking of pleasure through our five senses.*
2. *Doubt-lack of trust in oneself.*
3. *Ill-will towards others and oneself such as harming others through thoughts, hostility, resentment, hatred, and bitterness.*
4. *Restlessness/Worry-The inability to stay at peace or the inability to concentrate.*
5. *Sloth-Action with concentration, and no effort.*

This helps create a higher mind with creativity and wisdom. The quality of the mind is clear seeing. You will begin to see the truth of reality-the impermanence of things, suffering and emptiness. This is turn will create a sense of dis-attachment from all things (negative or positive). This leads to one towards the process of letting go. You can allow yourself to let go of the five hindrances, one by one. The end of craving of desiring begins to happen, which will lead to Liberation from the lower self, our dark nature, which is the enemy within.

Jainism

In Jainism, meditation is called Dhyana which is considered the central practice of spirituality. In Jainism the goal is to achieve a state of pure-self-awareness. It aims to realize the self, towards liberation and non-attachment.

A common Jain meditation is called Samayika, which means to be in the moment of continuous real-time. This is a meditation that consists of 48 minutes of silence. It is based on the Renewal process of the universe and the ever-evolving consciousness. Jain meditation focuses on an attitude of peaceful co-existence with all living beings.

Their ancient text Acaranga Sutra dating to 500 BCE explains in detail the Meditation Process, which leads to salvation. It consists of 3 parts called Ratnatraya (Three Jewels):

- *Right perception & faith*
- *Right Knowledge*
- *Right Conduct*

Jain meditation focuses on yogic postures and repetitive mantras. Lastly, Jainism has a meditation that uses contemplation on seven facts, which are as follows.

- *Life and non-life*
- *The inflow*
- *Bondage*
- *Stoppage*
- *Removal of karmas*
- *Liberation*
- *Incorrect Insights (Some Jain Meditators might add this to their contemplation, to develop right insight).*

Some other forms of contemplation include the pondering of the vast universe and the loneliness of the soul. In essence we are really alone-One. The 'I AM', Universal Consciousness is alone. So don't be afraid to be alone.

East Asian Cultures Traditions

Taoism

The Taoism meditation includes a variety of techniques to reach unity with the Dao. Some techniques are:

- *Concentration*
- *Visualization*

- *Qi Cultivation*
- *Contemplation*
- *Mindfulness Meditations*

Taoism meditation is a combination of Buddha, Martial Arts and Traditional Chinese Medicine. This yields three distinct types of techniques to meditate:

1. *Ding-Deep Concentration with contemplation that leads to absorption into the divine essence.*
2. *Guan-Insight, observe or wisdom meditation which leads to awareness of the unity of the Dao.*
3. *Cun- This type of meditation uses visualization of the Astrological essences, such as the sun and moon in correspondence with the body parts and organs to achieve health and well-being.*

Other techniques include qi cultivation through Martial Arts and breathing techniques. They focus on training the inner self by relaxing their breath and slowly expanding. This way, one expands the mind and then lets it go. As you maintain stillness of mind & body. One is able to tap into the oneness of consciousness and thus leads to heavenly states of beings.

Confucius talks about a "sitting forgetting meditation", called Zuowang. In the Taoist Zhuangzi, Confucius talks about this meditation, where his disciple Yan Hui describes it as relaxing of the mind and body as though they are not there, let go of all knowledge and intelligent thoughts learn to leave the body.

Other meditations known are related to Martial Arts or known as moving meditation, like Tai Chi, Qi-Qong which are qi-cultivating life-energy exercises. Another is daoyin (guiding & pulling), neigong (internal exercises) and neidan (internal alchemy), and taijiquan (great ultimate boxing). These are moving meditations that focus on stillness through movement. An example of neidan (Internal Alchemy) meditation is "Gathering the Light", from "The Secret of the Golden Flower." The meditation practice is a technique that focuses on the circulation of qi through sitting, breathing, and contemplating.

Judaism

Judaism has been using meditation techniques since its beginnings. In the Torah, the patriarch Isaac is described as going (lasuach) in the field. This is understood as a way of practicing prayer and meditation. There are many other examples found in the Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible that the prophets meditated and contemplated on the divine. Research has shown in the Old Testament, there are two Hebrew words for meditation 'haga' and 'siha' point towards meditation. 'Haga' means to sigh and murmur in the mind, whereas 'Siha' means to muse or repeat in the mind.

The website www.en.wikipedia.org/Meditation, says that "Classical Jewish texts espouse a wide range of meditative practices, often associated with the cultivation of Kavanaa or intention. The first layer of rabbinic law, the Mishnah,describes ancient sages "waiting" for an hour before their prayers, in order

to direct their hearts to the Omnipresent One (Mishnah Berakhot 5:1). Other early Rabbinic texts instructions for visualizing the Divine Presence (B. Talmud Sanhedrin 22a) and breathing with conscious gratitude for every breath (Genesis Rabba 14:9).”

The same website describes meditation as found in Jewish Mysticism as the work the Merkabah, which means chariot of God. Further adherents are encouraged to practice the Kabbalah as a meditative practice. “Kabbalistic meditation often involves the mental visualization of the supernal realms. Aryeh Kaplan has argued that the ultimate purpose of Kabbalistic meditation is to understand and cleave to the Divine.”

Christianity

“Through the study of books, one seeks God; by meditation one finds him.” Saint Pio of Pietrecina

There are many ways to meditate in Christianity. The Catholics used devotional prayers and the Rosary to meditate on the divinity of Mary and Jesus. The use repetition of prayers and Hail Mary’s to open the inner channels of light and divinity.

Meditation has evolved through different stages in Christianity. During the Roman Era, Philo of Alexandria introduced meditation as a form of spiritual exercise. He believed that these spiritual exercises increased one’s concentration and inner alchemy process. Meditation was considered a doorway to the inner path of divinity. This idea was taken further by Plotinus who said that to reflect and muse, ponder on the revelations of God created a mentally divine state of being. A 12th century Monk by the name of Guigo the second furthered the process of meditation by using stories from the bible in spiritual exercises to increase personal growth. He included reflection on Mary and Jesus’s life stories and of the divine love they displayed in the spiritual exercise and believed that through contemplation and reflecting on these points on is able to evolve their lower self and afflictions and transcend to divine knowledge.

Around this same time another style of meditation emerged called the Hesychasm. This variation was influenced by the Islamic Sufi Mystics and the Greek Philosophers and was first practiced on Mount Athos. Hesychasm was a simple but effective meditation technique that focused on the repetitive aspect, such as the Lord ‘s Prayer.

Many other forms of meditation developed which included different dimensions of contemplation and devotional prayers. For example, the Benedictine Monks used divine reading meditation called the “Lecto Divina.” This meditation was composed of four steps which led to divine ascent. The steps were as follows:

1. *Lecto (read)*
2. *Meditatio, (Ponder)*
3. *Oratio (Pray)*
4. *Contemplatio (Contemplate)*

Modern meditation techniques were developed by Teresa of Avila and Ignatius of Loyola and Peter Deunov. The ultimate goal of all meditation and prayers is to stimulate divine thoughts and communion with God. This leads to personal healing and development.

Islamic Meditations

As with all other religions, Islamic Meditation has a variety of approaches. The first one being Namaz, which is an obligatory form of prayer meditation, which is performed 5 times a day. It is considered a form of devotional prayer where the body movements and postures reflect a humble attitude, as the mind focuses on prayers.

Another vital aspect of Islamic Meditation is Zikr, which is repetition of the 99 names of God. Contemplation and pondering on the beautiful names of God (Allah) brings light to the heart and mind. These practices became the foundation of Sufism. In Sufism, Zikr was further developed through spiritual exercises that included breath control and repetition of holy words, concentration, and introspection.

Tafakkur or Tadabbur in Sufism literally means reflection upon the universe, the saints and stories of the Prophet Muhammad and his family. By this practice, one can develop the higher self and higher intellect, meaning the higher self becomes connected to the higher cognitive and emotional faculties. Which further leads to divine inspiration and liberation of heart and intellect. Thus, evolving the inner self towards the limitless, infinite where the meditator is so awed by the infinite, that his will submits to Gods Will, where "Thy Will Shall be done, not mine."

Many Sufis Orders practice moving meditations through a dance of whirling called the Sama/Sema. These meditators are called "Whirling Dervishes." The origins of the Sema are credited to Rumi, the Sufi Saint and creator of the Mevlevi Order. It is said that this form of meditation was created when Rumi had a mystical experience while walking in the marketplace. He heard the rhythmic hammering of the goldbeaters, which triggered a rhythmic beat within Rumi, where he heard the Zikr 'la ilaha ilallah,' meaning 'There is no god but Allah', in the rhythmic beating of the gold. He became so entranced in happiness that he stretched out his arms and started to spin and whirl in a circle. This became the beginning of the Mevlevi Sufi Order.

Sema/Sama is considered a selfless expression which is an experience of fanaa. In Sufism fanaa is annihilation of the self. The Sema/Sama ceremony represents a mystical journey of man's spiritual ascent through mind and love to perfection. Turning towards the truth, the follower grows through love, deserts his

ego, finds the truth and arrives at perfection. He then returns from this spiritual journey as a man who has reached maturity and a greater perfection, so as to love and to be of service to the whole of creation.

Rumi has said in reference to Sema / Sama, "For them it is the Sama of this world and the other. Even more for the circle of dancers within the Sama who turn and have in their midst, their own Kaaba." This relates Sama to the pilgrimage to Mecca, in that both are intended to bring all who are involved closer to God.

Other forms of Sama/Sema are Qawwali, which is singing and using instruments tossing hymns, poetic love hymns. The goal is to meditate on God through melodies and dancing. It brings out a person's love of God, purifies the soul, and is a way of finding God. This practice reveals what is already disclosed in the heart. All doubts disappears and the heart and the soul can communicate directly with God. One reaches Wajd, a trancelike state of ecstasy or spiritual drunkenness.

Zoroastrian Meditation

The Zoroastrian practice of meditation includes breath control and mindfulness. The meditator focuses on spiritual exercises that cultivate breath and qi circulation. The focus is on an idea, or an emotion such as gratitude, love, or a sacred word, or repetition of sacred verses or words, or focusing on a single point to attain stillness and expand their awareness. The website www.parsi-times.com/2018/12/the-zoroastrian-form-of-meditation/ says that,

"The Pahlavi Zarathushtnameh says Zarathustra went in search of the Truth at the age of thirty and on Mount Ushi-Darena he received divine revelation over a period of ten years. Ushi-Darena is variously translated to mean 'sustainer of inner wisdom.' Zarathushtra surely must have reflected on the truths of nature using his inner wisdom, but perhaps not necessarily sitting in a dark cave. He probably may have pondered on the truths of nature watching the sun rise and set, the seasons change, the moon, the stars, and of course, Fire-the giver of light and life." The website goes on to say that Zoroastrian focus on prayers called Manthra, which are sounds that unite the conscious, with the subconsciousness and super-conscious planes of existence. That is, they use the sounds created from the repetitive practice of sacred words to connect to the higher self. By this meditative practice they can bring the meditator to a higher state of consciousness.

The website www.parsi-times.com/2018/12/the-zoroastrian-form-of-meditation/ says that,

"Composed mainly in the Avestan language (the language in which Asho Zarathushtra received revelation), they are believed to possess a Divine Cosmic Energy. Asho Zarathushtra terms himself manthram, i.e., composer of mathras or utterances of spiritual power, comparable to the 'Logos' or

'Word' referred to in John's Gospel. It is said, Manthra is the transformation of Divine Energy into words which human beings can vocalize. The Manthra of Ahunavar or the Yatha Ahu Vairyo is the primordial sound of reality beyond the limitations of Time and Space. To Zoroastrians, the Ahunavar is what the OM is to Hindus and Buddhists-the means of concentrating and arousing forces that already exist within the human psyche. When uttered with feeling and concentration the Manthra sets of subtle vibrations which affect different psychic centers or chakras in the body."

Meditation is a way to inner growth and becoming aware of the different states of consciousness. It enables us to look beyond our current awareness to expand awareness. When one is at peace with mind and body then peace and joy will come to them. The aim of meditation is to bring the restless mind and body into a state of relaxation and awareness.

The website www.parsi-times.com/2018/12/the-zoroastrian-form-of-meditation/ further says that, the "aim of meditation is to bring the restless mind and body into a state of relaxation and total awareness. Peace and Joy come to that individual whose mind and body works in harmony." It explains that meditation is sacred so before prayer or meditation practice the individual takes a bath. "In these prayers, he/she offers homage, the devotee attunes himself/herself to these energies and derives spiritual nourishment. He / She may also meditate offering the Atash Niyaesh before the fire, either at home or at an Agiary or Atash Behram."

By the process of meditation, the individual is expanding consciousness. The same website says that meditation "...is learning to view every event objectively as the means for self-knowledge and spiritual growth. The many thoughts which flow ceaselessly into the conscious mind of all human beings do not disturb the person whose body and mind works in harmony. Such a person takes every situation, every relationship with the world, with the environment, with his friends, with his family and work into his discipline meditation."

Bahai Meditation

Like all other cultures Bahai meditation is used for spiritual development by pondering the sacred words of God, Bahai use prayers and meditation to commune with God. The Bahais' read their holy text, written by Bahaullah, in the morning and evening and meditate on it.

They also fast every year for 19 days from sunrise to sunset, where the pray and meditate to rejuvenate their spiritual forces. They use prayer, contemplation, and reflection on their daily actions as a form of meditative exercises.

Japanese Meditation

Shikantaza is a Japanese meditation that practices on "Silent Illumination" or "Serene Reflection," which is similar to the Chinese Zazen. Shikantaza was created

by a Zen Buddhist monk called Tiantong Rujing (1162-1228). This practices the simple act of just sitting in conscious awareness.

Shikantaza means nothing but sitting or meditation or just sitting for silent reflection. This means your whole being is just sitting in silence with open awareness.

“Shikantaza is described best as, quiet sitting in open awareness, reflecting directly the reality of life.” Merv Fowler

Meditation is just sitting and being aware of everything going on in the mind. Whatever you think or feel, be aware and at the same time be aware of your whole being sitting. If you do it right, you will begin to feel a letting go of thoughts, emotions and sensations. You then need to stay with the practice and gradually include the whole environment as your body. Masters Zhang Shengyen, a Buddhist monk says In Attaining the Way: A Guide to the Practice of Chan Buddhism, that, “Whatever enters the door of your senses becomes one totality, extending from your body to the whole environment. This is silent illumination.”

Another common Japanese Meditation is Zen Meditation, which the Japanese use as a tool to attain spiritual development. They use Koans in their meditation practice, Koan is a question or a statement and sometimes a story or a dialogue which stimulates the mind to go beyond its current limited belief. The teacher presents a statement that creates doubt, thus enticing the student to think beyond their current belief system.

To become enlightened was to become more knowledgeable. It was to become conscious of enhancing relationships with other people. It gave insights to human psychology, as to why people acted and behaved in certain ways-thus creating better understanding, forgiveness, and acceptance. In this way they were able to create peaceful co-existence and tolerance of other people.

Zen Meditation is another tool that the Japanese use for spiritual development. Even the Chinese use koans in their meditation practice. They use a koan which is a question or statement and sometimes a story or a dialogue, which stimulates the mind to go beyond its current limited belief. The teacher presents a statement that creates doubt, thus enticing the student to think beyond their current belief system.

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“The Dancer is one with the Dance.” Gallwey

A Koan, explains Victor Sogen Hori explores the concept of nonduality. He says that a central theme of many Koans is the “identity opposites.” Hori gives an example of a Koan, Hakuin’s well-known Koan,” Two hands clap and there is a

sound, what is the sound of one hand?" is clearly about two and one. The Koan asks, "You know what duality is, now what is nonduality?" In "What is your original face before your mother and father were born? "The phrase "father and mother" alludes to duality. This is obvious to someone versed in the Chinese tradition, where so much philosophical thought is presented in the imagery of paired opposites. The phrase "your original face" alludes to the original nonduality.

When you look at the flower and the flower is looking at you. Koan insights lead one to deepen and learn the lesson and further apply it into their life. They focus on a piece of a statement, a phrase which is like a paradox, a puzzle. This creates doubt which forces the mind to think beyond their current mindset.

Exp. Who am I?

What is this?

What was the original face before my father and mother were born?

The website www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/koan says that, "Muso Soseki (1275-1351),a Japanese's contemporary of Zhongfeng Mingben, relativized the use of koans. The study of koans had become popular in Japan, due to the influence of Chinese Masters such as Zhongfeng Mingben. Despite belonging to the Rinzai-school, Muso Soseki also made extensive use of richi (teaching), explaining the sutras, insteadof kikan(koan). According to Muso Soseki, both are upaya, "skillful means" meant to educate students. Muso Soseki called both Shokogyu, "little jewels," tools to help the student to attain satori."

The website further states that, "In the Rinzai School of thought a gradual succession of koans is studied.

"Koan practice starts with the Shokan, or "first barrier," usually the mu-koan (wordhead) or the koan "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" After having attained Kensho, students continue their practice investigating subsequent koans. In the Takuju-school, after breakthrough students work through the Gateless Gate (Mumonkan), the Blue Cliff Road (Hekigan-roku), the EntanglingVines (Shumon Kattoshu), and the Collection of Wings of the Blackbind (Chin'u Shu). The Inzan - school uses its own internally generated list of koans."

In the modern study of koans, students' study under a school and curriculum which takes around 10-12 years to complete. The focus is to create a spiritual personality which allows the student to live in normal society and apply his teachings and understanding to daily life.

Another vital aspect of koan training is to stabilize the self with breathing techniques. The same website explains that "Hakuin Ekaku, the 17th century revitalizer of the Rinzai school, taught several practices which serve to correct physical and mental imbalances arising from, among other things, incorrect or

excessive koan practice. The "soft-butter" method (nanso no ho) involve cultivation of ki centered on the tanden (Chinese: dantian). These practices are described in Hakuin's works Orategama and Yasen Kanna, and are still taught in some Rinzai lineages today."

The website www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/koan says that, "Students are instructed to concentrate on the "word-head," " By deep concentration one is able to make this word their whole body, your whole self, thus you become the one great inquiry. This great inquiry is actually the act of creating a doubt within oneself. Practice this day and night to arouse the "great inquiry," the great doubt." The same website says that this great doubt "...builds up "strong internal pressure (gidan), never stopping knocking from within at the door of (the) mind, demanding to be resolved. The continuous pondering of the breakthrough koan or "word head", leads to Kensho, an initial insight into seeing the Divine nature (the Buddha/Christ/Mahdi). The aim of the break-through koan is to see "non-duality of subject and object." The monk himself in his seeking is the koan. Realization of this is the insight,..." The aim is to be one with the koan.

Once the Koan is given to the student the teacher monitors their progress by Sassho-Checking questions, to make sure that the student understands. Which is then followed by capping phrases, to demonstrate that he has understood the koan when the student has passed the koan, he will select a verse or phrase that expresses the insight he has gained while meditating on the specific koan. The student finds the capping phrase in a Zen phrase book.

"The fault is not in our stars, but in ourselves." Shakespeare

Meditation In the Modern World

Since the 19th century, meditation practices from the Eastern and Asian traditions have spread across the Western Society. As communication and technology opened globally, spiritual teachings from the East and Asian parts of the world transformed the west.

In 1893 "The World Parliament of Religions" held an event in Chicago that introduced Asian Spiritual Teachings, which included different styles of meditation. Further to the discussion, the Indian, Swami Vivekananda opened Ashrams that taught meditation.

In 1904, Anagarika Development brough forth the philosophy of Theravada Buddhist Meditation. In 1907 Zen Principles were introduced by Soyen Shak. Further, Abdul Bahai gave lectures on Bahai Spiritual teachings and meditation. Other contributions came from the Hare Krishna, Transcendental Meditation, Sahaja Yoga, Osho, Oneness University, Sufi Mystics, and the New Age Movement.

In modern times meditation is performed for the purpose of relaxation, stress reduction, self-healing and self-development.

Some Common Meditations

Meditation I

- *Begin by sitting or lying in a relaxed position.*
- *Let the breath flow in and out.*
- *Just focus on breathing, Inhale & Exhale. Inhale & Exhale.*
- *If thoughts arise let them pass by and bring your attention back to your breath again.*
- *Do this for 10 minutes a day and increase as you feel more comfortable.*

Meditation II

- *Start with 2-3 minutes a day for one week. Gradually increase by 2-3 minutes every week or every other. Whatever makes you comfortable.*
- *Don't worry on how to meditate just start doing it.*
- *Start by breathing in and out. Count your breaths.*
- *Follow your breathing.*
- *If your mind wanders, just bring your focus back as soon as you realize it.*
- *If you desire to add a positive affirmation, a short phrase, prayer, or even a word. Silently repeat this it will help bring focus.*

www.innerpeacemeditation.org/meditation-instructions.html states that,

"If you find that sitting quietly is difficult for you for any reason then give up meditating with a mantra and instead consider doing yoga, tai chi, walking or running to relax your mind."

For more advanced meditation techniques you can use the following;

Meditation III – Pranayama Technique

Before I relate the meditation, let me explain what Pranayama is. Prana means breath and pranayama means to control the breath. The website www.yogapoint.com/info/pranayama.htm states that,

""Pranayama is control of Breath". "Prana" is breath or vital energy in the body. On subtle levels prana represents the pranic energy responsible for life or life force, and "ayama" means control. So, Pranayama is "Control of Breath". One can control the rhythms of pranic energy with pranayama and achieve healthy body and mind. Patanjali is his text of Yoga Sutras mentioned Pranayama as means of attaining higher states of awareness, he mentions the holding of breath as important practice of reaching Samadhi."

The best meditation technique is usually achieved through controlling the breath. One can achieve a still mind, a relaxed body, altered states of mind (consciousness). The inhalation and exhalation process is where the key to meditation lies. The place between inhalation & exhalation is the place where the Divine Truth and nirvana is achieved. The following is the Alternating Nostril Breathing Meditation, which assists in clearing the circulatory system, it clears the channels for proper circulation.

- *Sit or lie in a relaxed position.*
- *Begin by taking deep breaths, inhale & exhale several times.*
- *Still the mind. If a thought arises, let it pass, bring your focus back to your breath.*
- *Now take your right thumb and close your right nostril with it. Inhale with the left nostril.*
- *Then close your left nostril with your ring finger and remove your right thumb from the right nostril and release the right nostril and release the breath slowly.*
- *Repeat this 5 times.*
- *Then relax.*

Another similar way to do this meditation is you can also practice using the following technique taken from ***www.chopra.com/ccl/nadi-shodhana-how-to-practice-alternate-nostril-breathing*****,**

“*1. Take a comfortable and tall seat, making sure your spine is straight and your heart is open.*

2. Relax your left palm comfortably into your lap and bring your right hand just in front of your face.

3. With your right hand, bring your pointer finger and middle finger to rest between your eyebrows, lightly using as an anchor. The fingers we’ll be actively using are the thumb and ring finger.

Close your eyes and take a deep breath in and out through the nose.

5. Close your right nostril with your right thumb. Inhale through the left nostril slowly and steadily.

6. Close the left nostril with your finger so both nostrils are held closed; retain your breath at the top of the inhale for a brief pause.

7. Open your right nostril and release the breath slowly through the right side; Pause briefly at the bottom of the exhale.

8. Inhale through the right side slowly.

9. Hold both nostrils closed (with ring finger and thumb)

10. Open your left nostril and release breath slowly through the left side. Pause briefly at the bottom.

11. Repeat 5-10 cycles, allowing your mind to following your inhales and exhales.

Steps 5-9 represent one complete cycle of alternate nostril breathing. If you're moving through the sequence slowly, one cycle should take you about 30-40 seconds. Move through 5-10 cycles when you're feeling stressed, anxious, or in need of a reset button."

Another breathing method that is beneficial for releasing emotional & mental thoughts and detoxification is the following.

- *Sit in the lotus position or lie straight in a comfortable position.*
- *Begin by taking a few deep breaths.*
- *Now inhale by breathing in from the abdomen and count up to four breaths and hold breath for sixteen counts (multiply by four the number of breaths taken)*
- *Then slowly let out your breath in eight counts (half the held breaths and double the number of breaths taken).*
- *Repeat five times*
- *Increase or decrease as needed.*

Achieving a still mind is the hardest thing to do. But it can be done, given time and practice. To achieve a still mind it is important to stop the incessant chatter of your mind. That is to become free of your thoughts for a few minutes. This can be done by the practice of letting go of your thought. When a thought arises, just let them pass, sit quietly and try not to do anything about it.

White Light Meditation

The best way to protect yourself from negative energy is with white light. The following is a simple technique to practice white light meditation;

- *Sit, or lay on the floor and close your eyes.*
- *Imagine white light warming and engulfing first, your Crown Chakra and bathing your eyes in light. Let the white light warm your mind and relax and release all thoughts.*
- *Move the white light down the chakras and let it fill each one with white light. Allow the white light to massage each chakra. Finish at the root chakra.*
- *Then allow the white light to engulf your entire being. This protects your aura from negative energies and allows your "psychic defense" to come into play.*
- *This can be done at any time, in any place. Just close your eyes and visualize this white light protector.*

Walking Meditation

Walking meditation Is another great meditation style to incorporate in your daily life. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and Zen Master, popularized walking meditation as a form of mindfulness meditation. It is similar to the meditation the Christian monks used, as they performed their daily tasks. Thich Nhat Hanh explains the concept of conscious breathing by counting your steps, while walking. In his book Walking Meditation, he says that,

"Meditation is not meant to help us avoid problems or run away from difficulties. It is meant to allow positive healing to take place. To meditate is to learn how to stop being carried away by our regrets about the past, our anger or despair in the present, or our worries about the future. By practicing the art of stopping, we can enter the present moment and be nourished by the beauty and wonder of life in and around us: the smell of flowers, the warmth of sunshine, the color of the sky.

To practice mindfulness is to begin to realize that we have a choice-to stop and rest or run, to be angry or happy. Once we choose to stop, everything will be okay. Before learning walking meditation, we begin by learning how to breathe mindfully. This is the best way to help us learn to rest and stop. When we breathe and know that we are breathing, our wandering mind begins to rest on the pillow of our breath. A feeling of calm and ease then naturally arises.

The fundamental practice of conscious breathing meditation is to nourish your mindfulness and learn how to keep it present, alive, and strong. When you learn how to generate the energy of mindfulness and allow it to penetrate everything you do, understanding, compassion, and loving kindness will naturally flower in you. At the beginning you may think that you are practicing mindfulness only while walking, but then one morning you might make some tea; you pick up the mug and suddenly you smell the tea more keenly than ever before. And as you take a sip, the tea becomes more delicious because the energy of mindfulness that you have developed allows you to taste it more directly and deeply. Your breath is part of your body, so when your mind is in touch with your breath through mindful breathing, it is also in touch with your body. True rest and peace are the natural result of conscious breathing in which body, breath, and mind come into unity."

In the same book, Thich Nhat goes on to explain that one can practice conscious breathing while standing, lying down, walking and even jogging or running. A conscious breathing technique is breathing in deeply through your nose and breathe from the abdomen, feeling the rise of your abdomen and saying, "In One." When exhaling let your abdomen fall slowly and saying, "Out One." Continue this for ten breaths. This technique brings about focus and teaches one to cultivate mindfulness.

Mindfulness meditation can be practiced with any activity, having one-pointed attention on walking, cooking, or gardening. Staying fully present in whatever you do is the important aspect of this meditation practice. The goal of mindfulness meditation is to find joy in one's own life, and to develop love and compassion for all forms of life. Those who connect mindfulness with the presence of God in everything they too can experience what St. Paul describes as "Praying Ceaselessly".

Conclusion

There are many ways to meditate. It can be done in simple stillness, or praying or in movement like the Sufi mystics, or through the rhythmic beat of the Native Americans. Whatever method you choose to follow has a similar goal. To still the mind from all external and internal influences. To let the mind, focus on a single point creates an expanded sense of awareness. To bring this state and wisdom of inner knowing and peace into your daily life so you can create a better world around you and live in peace and harmony.

Holistic Fitness for Health and Well-Being

By Saiyra Akbar, & Shahir Ali

Maintaining health within all aspects of our life is necessary for us to be truly healthy. The key to health lies in the fact that the mind, emotions, and spirit are connected. We are far more than our physical bodies. We are multi-dimensional beings, which means our self includes various levels of beings, such as our mental body, our emotional body, our spiritual body which are all parts of our whole self. In addition, our body cannot survive without a life force, which is the breath that animates us, it is known as Prana, chi, or qi. Research has shown that illnesses have physiological, emotional, mental, and spiritual elements to it. All our experience is a simultaneous experience of body, emotions, mind, and spirit. A human being is seen from the holistic viewpoint, that is, as a whole being, with all its separate parts such as, feelings, thoughts, physical form, and spiritual nature functioning in unity.

Therefore, to achieve good health requires a balance of all aspects of ourselves. Which includes healthy positive thoughts and thinking patterns, emotions, spiritual satisfaction (includes prayers, meditations, etc.), and eating right, and proper exercise. Brian Luke Seaward in his book, "Achieving the Mind-Body-Spirit Connection," gives a detailed explanation of these aspects, he says that,

"Ageless wisdom shared by the sages and mystics of all times reveals that health is composed of the integration, balance, and harmony of your unique aspects: mind, body, spirit, and emotions in which the whole (often expressed in the form of a circle) is always greater than the sum of the parts."

Therefore, each aspect of the self must be balanced and connected to achieve wholeness. We must learn to nourish both our inner and outer selves. Being a whole being is taking all the parts that we think are separate from us, such as our body, emotions, mind, and spirit, and integrating them into one simultaneous experience. When we take care and nourish our inner self it reflects to our outer world. When we exercise our body, we are by the act of movement expressing and achieving a harmonious flow of outer and inner energies. The energy from our inner world flows outwards, and vice versa. At the same time, we are transforming our emotional energy into movement, allowing it to move away from stagnation. For

example, when one is angry and they can go for a jog or long walk, this way they are able to burn off those angry emotions in the movement of those exercises, thus creating calmness within.

An important approach to healing the whole self is physical exercise. With exercise, a person can become healthier, more mentally calm, agile, happier, and have a closer connection to their soul/spirit. It also allows you to be present in the ever-changing moment. Eric N. Franklin, writes in "Condition for Dance," that, "Being present in movement means experiencing the moment-to-moment changes in shape and dynamics in every part of the body during the whole exercise."

The process of physical movement can connect the four aspects of your being in the moment while your body achieves better fitness. Fitness has many aspects to it, and all of them need to be taken into consideration. Eric N. Franklin says in 'Conditioning for Dance,' that, "By actually noticing and feeling the changes, an exercise has on the whole body you can make training more effective. Anyone benefits if the mind is present with the body while exercising." To condition the body for exercise it is important to create a mind-body exercise regime. This would include the following aspects that you should consider before beginning any exercise regime:

- *Agility-How agile would you like to be? Choose the appropriate exercise with your degree of agility.*
- *Flexibility-How Flexible are you? What degree of flexibility would you like? Choose stretches accordingly. Perform stretches that improve your flexibility.*
- *Coordination-Are your movements coordinated?*
- *Visualization and mental imagery techniques to improve your training. Visualize doing the exercise perfectly.*
- *Be Conscious of every movement and how the exercise is affecting the body.*
- *Muscular Strength-What are your goals to attain muscular strength? Strength training exercises should be utilized to increase the activity of the muscle, so that the muscles move in alignment and balance. Exp. Aerobic training, swimming, cycling, fast walking, and jogging.*
- *Muscular Endurance-What are your goals to attaining endurance? To improve endurance, you will need to increase your repetitions in a completed set, or increase using resistance by using higher resistance bands, heavier dumbbells etc.*
- *Speed-What are the varying levels of speed you can exercise at? What goals would you like to achieve? Speed is also the intensity of the exercise. Challenge yourself to workout at difficult levels*
- *Alignment: Improve your alignment to keep the body in balance. This means using correct posture when exercising and keep the body parts aligned when doing stretches and other strength training moves. This usually goes hand-in hand with flexibility exercises.*

Once you have decided on your fitness goals, you can then proceed to choose the type of exercise regime that meets your goals. Exercise gives one

more vitality and zest for life. It also boosts your confidence level. Each person has their way to exercise. There are endless ways to exercise and move the body. The body is made for movement. The key to exercise is not to focus only on one part of the physical body but on the entire being. To achieve a total workout, one must not only exercise the body but also the mind by instilling positive emotions and letting go of negativity. When we feel good about ourselves our soul's spiritual connection to higher energies is established. Even if you think you are too unhealthy and not good at any type of exercise, you can still find something to excel in. John Bingham in his book "No Need for Speed", that, "The beauty of being really bad at something Is that you can get better with almost no work."

In this course we will explore the different types of exercises and how each can be used in a way that will exercise the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual bodies and the entire being.

Exercising State of Mind

"Your state of mind influences the effect of an exercise." Eric N. Franklin, "Conditioning for Dance".

Physical movement and exercising are important for the health and well-being of an individual, whether child or adult. A lifestyle of no exercise can lead to many diseases and disabilities, such as obesity, stress, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, sciatica, etc.

Along with that, lack of exercise affects the body's equilibrium and development, which results in affecting ones' level of hunger, sleep, sexual desire etc. Each part of the body is benefited by exercise and physical movement. This includes our skeletal and muscular systems also. The bone structures help protect the body, and its movement, so exercising regularly keeps it in optimal condition. Furthermore, the bones regenerate their mineral content calcium and phosphorous with regular exercise and stretching. The joints also need regular movement to stay flexible and healthy.

Aerobic exercise enhances circulatory and respiratory efficiency. It is a vigorous type of exercise that allows you to have more endurance, especially in your heart and lungs. Though you can reach aerobic metabolism quickly, to have an aerobic workout you must exercise vigorously for at least 15 minutes. Examples of aerobic exercise are running, swimming, riding a bicycle. Regular exercise of any kind can increase endurance, flexibility, and holistic health. Eric N Franklin says in,

'Conditioning for Dance," "Bursts of intense exercise performed in less than one minute are called anaerobic. Running, swimming, or any continuous exercise that increases heart and lung (cardio-respiratory) activity for several minutes or more is termed aerobic exercise."

Another important aspect of exercising is being mentally prepared to do a fitness program. This will create an exercising state of mind. The state that our mind is in is an essential aspect of our mental health. Arno Ilgner in his book, "The Rock Warrior's Way," says that "Our performance is greatly affected by the subconscious hidden parts of our mind." He further says,

"We must become aware of mental processes that are subtle, taken for granted, hidden, or overlooked. Consciousness of our mental processes is the first step in understanding how they affect our performance."

It is essential to know that our minds are always thinking, very rarely do we recognize this fact and can control our thoughts. So, how do we control our thoughts? First by understanding our thoughts and thinking process - That is by slowing down our thinking conversation and becoming aware of each thought. All day and night, and even when you dream, your mind is full of thoughts. Silencing the mind is extremely hard to do, but it can be done through the process of intense concentration. Even when one is exercising intensely it is easy to stop thinking and be present in the motion.

One way to silence the mind is through meditation, which also gives mental relaxation. Dharma Singh Khalsa in his book "Meditation as Medicine," says that,

> *"Meditation is excellent at removing the obscuring screens of your concerns, and letting you see things the way they really are."*

When exercising, feel every sensation and breathe deeply. Do not actively think. If thoughts arise, let them pass and clear your mind again. This type of active meditation can help you achieve the ability to meditate anywhere. Another type of meditation is to concentrate your thoughts on a single object of your choice and hold it still in your mind.

If you practice a dangerous or exhilarating physical exercise, then there is a certain type of relaxed and alert state of mind that will allow you to perform with more mastery. This type of mental state is often referred to as the warrior state of mind. Arno Ilgner states in his book, "The Rock Warrior's Way,", that, "The warrior hones his body and mind. If he does not, he will not live long." He further explains, "He must perform with absolute mastery and calm in the face of horrendous mortal danger." An extremely active, yet calm state of awareness is involved in the warrior's state of mind. It is complete concentration on the task ahead, without any distraction or fear.

Depending on the nature of the exercise, you may want to focus on the meditative mind or the warrior state of mind. Either way is good, the important factor to note here is the calm and focused attention mental states while performing the exercise. That is at the peak of your performance keep your mind calm, and

when meditating learns to be aware, and alert at the same. This will create a balanced holistic state of being.

There are many benefits to exercising regularly. It can make one feel better. When you exercise for at least 30 minutes you stimulate the motor nerves that regulate the endocrine glands which are the neurotransmitters that receive more adrenaline. This release of adrenaline can produce a tranquil feeling of well-being and joy.

You will notice that when you do not exercise regularly you feel tense and agitated. This is because adrenaline builds up when you do not exercise regularly and this suppressed adrenaline can cause feeling of agitation, tense muscles, and attitude, and even aggressive. Emotion is energy in motion, and the emotional energy circulates throughout the body. If one has a negative emotional state then those negative emotions will circulate throughout your system causing energy to eventually become blocked, resulting in disease. Therefore, to have balanced emotional health it is important to burn the energetic excess through the process of exercise.

Warming Up & Cooling Down

An important aspect of exercising is the warming up and cooling down process. Exercise can cause damage if you forget to warm up and cool down. Warming up can be done by stretching or a few minutes of light exercise. There are numerous ways to warm up. The essential point is that by warming up you make your body ready for vigorous exercise, and at the same time this process also aids in circulating the blood and oxygen to all the muscles. Also, your body will release carbonic acid instead of lactic acid if you warm-up for at least 20 to 40 seconds.

It is recommended that you warm up all your muscles, even if they are not in use, because all muscles work together in every motion. Arnold G Nelson and Jouko Kokkonen say in their book "Stretching Anatomy", that,

> *"In general, any movement that requires moving a body part to the point at which there is an increase in the movement of a joint can be called stretching exercise. Stretching can be done either actively or passively. Active stretching occurs when the person doing the stretch is the one holding the body part in the stretched position. Passive stretching occurs when someone else moves the person to the stretch position and then holds the person in the position for a set time."*

He further states the benefits of stretching in the same book that,

> *"The following are several chronic training benefits gained from using a regular stretching program:*
>
> - *Improved flexibility, stamina (muscular endurance), and muscular strength. The degree of benefit depends on how much stress is put on the muscle.*

Medium or heavy stretches are recommended. You can do this by building up to doing long stretches of high intensity.

- *Reduced muscle soreness, aches, and pains. Use only light stretches if muscle soreness prevails.*
- *Improved flexibility…*
- *Good muscular and joint mobility.*
- *More efficient muscular movements and fluidity of motion.*
- *Greater ability to exert maximum force through a wider range of motion.*
- *Prevention of some lower back problems.*
- *Improved appearance and self-image.*
- *Improved body alignment and posture.*
- *Better warm-up and cool-down in an exercise session.*

General Recommendations

- *Try to include all the major muscle groups in any stretching program.*
- *Do at least two different stretches for each joint movement.*
- *Before any physical activity, use light stretches as part of the warm-up.*
- *After an exercise routine, cool down with medium intensity stretches.*
- *If muscles are sore after exercising, using only light stretches two or three times with a 5-to-10-second hold for each stretch performed.*
- *If muscle soreness persists for several days, continue using light stretches two or three times with a 5-to 10-second hold for each stretch performed."*

When you are done exercising, you need to cool down, by letting your breath slow down and lowering your heart rate. The same stretching exercises used for warming up can be used for cooling down. If you sit right away after a workout, acids get stuck in the abdomen muscles which is harmful for the body. The following are some common exercise programs to enhance your holistic fitness and well-being:

Walking

"Life is a tunnel, not a cave. Keep walking and you will find the light again." Atticus

Since the beginning of time, humans have been walking. Most people have been walking since they were toddlers and walk every day. Walking is a powerful exercise. While walking, it is important to keep your back straight, relaxed. Focus on your step and the impact of your feet hitting the ground and do not absorb it. Instead, let the impact bounce your body back up. If you pay close attention to the energy of walking you will discover that you can walk in such a way that you will feel like you are floating rather than beating the ground.

Another important aspect of walking is breathing. Breathe in as much air as possible and exhale all the stale air from your lungs with each breath. Keep your attention on your breath and let your mind be clear.

"The welcoming path. The empty path welcomes you, fragrant with grass and little flowers, the path paved with paddy fields still bearing the marks of your childhood and the fragrance of mother's hand. Walk leisurely, peacefully. Your feet touch the Earth deeply. Do not let your thoughts carry you away, come back to the path every moment. The path is your dear friend. She will transmit to you her solidity and her peace." Thich Nhat Hanh

Nguyen Anh-Huong & Thich Nhat Hanh talk about the benefits of conscious breathing in their book "Walking Meditation." They say "When we breathe and know that we are breathing, our wandering mind begins to rest on the pillow of our breath. A feeling of calm and ease then naturally arise."

They further explain the breath process, in the same book,

"Place your hands on your abdomen so you can feel it rise and fall with your in-breath and out-breath. Have you noticed that it rises as you breathe in and falls as you breathe out? This is healthy breathing. When we are tense or taken over by a strong emotion, our breathing becomes short and shallow, and our belly does not move at all. Now as you breathe in, follow the air that enters your body through your nose, feel the rise of your abdomen, and quietly say, "In-one." With your out-breath, feel the fall of your abdomen and quietly say, "Out-one." Now say "In-two", on the second in-breath, and "Out-two," on the second out-breath. Continue for ten full breaths. Counting your breath in this way helps you to cultivate mindfulness and concentration, which are crucial for nourishing peace and happiness."

Performing conscious breathing a minimum of twice a day will eventually result in becoming a part of you. It will be difficult in the beginning, but the more you practice, the more natural it will become to you. Also, you can increase the breaths from 10 to 15 and to whatever feels comfortable to you.

Prayer walking or walking meditation is a wonderful way to get connected to nature. You should practice prayer walk when you do not have to be in a hurry. Keep a prayer, word, mantra, idea, or picture in your mind, or even listen to meditation music. Walking meditation allows one to get absorbed in the moment and you can experience your walk, nature, and your life from a new perspective. With every step, you rejuvenate your body and soul, while calming the thoughts and emotions.

"Take my hand, we will walk. We will only walk. We will enjoy our walk, without thinking of arriving anywhere. Walk Peacefully. Walk Happily. Our walk is a peace walk. Our walk is a happiness walk; Then we learn that there is no peace walk; that peace is the walk, that happiness is the walk. We walk ourselves. We walk for everyone, always hand in hand. Walk and touch peace every moment. Walk and touch happiness every moment. Each step brings a fresh breeze. Each step makes a flower bloom under our feet. Kiss the earth with your feet. Print on Earth your love and happiness. Earth will be safe when we feel in us enough safety." Thich Nhat Hanh, "Walking Meditation"

Walking is a great way to get aerobic exercise in one's life and can be done at anytime and anywhere. A famous walker by the name of Peace Pilgrim changed the

whole concept of walking. Peace Pilgrim was a mystic, spiritual teacher, vegetarian, and the first woman to walk the entire Appalachian Trail in one season. The website https://www.npr.org/2013/01/01/168346591/peace-pilgrims-28-year-walk-for-a-meaningful-way-of-life, says that,

"In 1953, Mildred Norman set off from the Rose Bowl parade on New Year's Day with a goal of walking the entire country for peace. She left her given name behind and took up a new identity: Peace Pilgrim. When Peace Pilgrim started, the Korean War was still under way, and an ominous threat of a nuclear attack was on the minds of many Americans. And so, with "Peace Pilgrim" written across her chest, she began walking "coast to coast for peace." For 28 years — the time she spent on her journey — she never used money. She gave new meaning to the word minimalist, wearing the same clothes every day: blue pants and a blue tunic that held everything she owned: a pen, a comb, a toothbrush, and a map. That is, it. "I own only what I wear and carry. I just walk until given shelter, fast until given food," she said at the time. "I don't even ask; it's given without asking. I tell you; people are good. There's a spark of good in everybody."

Walk for health, walk for love, walk for peace.

There is no reason to limit yourself. You can learn to balance the heart, mind, body, and soul in any exercise, then you can learn to balance these bodies in every moment.

Hiking

Another good way to exercise is hiking. Hiking is a good way to get away from the everyday city life. The mind, emotions, and soul can be greatly enhanced by adventuring away from the stressful environment of civilization. While hiking it is recommended to keep good posture and firm footing. Hiking can help you become whole and healthy. Keith McCafferty says in his book, "L.L. Bean Hiking and Backpacking Handbook," that, "It is probably the most natural and least stressful of aerobic exercises. "

Walking up and down mountains is a unique experience and important for holistic health. You use a different set of muscles when going up and another set of muscles for going down. There are many benefits to hiking, your emotions will be calmer, you are thinking patterns will change as you climb up. Living in the fast-paced city life, we have forgotten how to relax. We are always on the go thus depleting our energies. Also, our hectic lives cause stress, unhealthy habits, and troubles to form and take over. By hiking in the mountains, we breathe in pure air and let out toxic air. We also let go of our burdens, and anxieties as our minds take in different scenery. Keith McCafferty says in his book, "L.L. Bean Hiking and Backpacking Handbook." that, "Hiking is the act of shedding civilization one step at a time."

Respite from the everyday city life can lead to better health and relaxation. Keith McCafferty says in the same book, that, "The mind relaxes with the rhythm of

hiking. Therefore, hiking is extremely beneficial for the mind. As the clutter and complexity of the life behind us are shed like a chaff, we are able not only to think more logically, but to isolate matters of consequence from the trivial worries that so often monopolize our minds." By relaxing our troubled minds, we can connect to our higher self and the higher sense of self-completeness. McCafferty says in his book, "L.L. Bean Hiking and backpacking Handbook," that, "Hiking can indeed result in greater self-esteem, as we overcome our fear of the unknown, develop wilderness skills, and come to trust in the trail." The hiking trail then becomes not only a physical journey but also a spiritual one. McCafferty says in the same book, that, "With each turn of the path a new facet of our character is revealed to the sun, so that hiking becomes a safari of self-discovery, even of spiritual rebirth, as we free ourselves from the urban oppressions and experience personal growth and a newfound sense of worth in the glories of nature."

In the Native American Cultures, shamans often go to the mountains in search of answers, such as a vision quest. In Greek Mythology the Gods lived on a Mountain. The tops of mountains are seen as spiritual places and close to the heavens. Mountains have pure prana energy, to revitalize your system and rejuvenate your whole being. It is also metaphoric to rise above your everyday concerns and to transcend from worldly affairs or problems. In Eastern societies, Muhammad and Moses went to the mountains to attain enlightenment. Buddha attained enlightenment by climbing mountains and retreating to solitary places. The Essenes, John the Baptist, and Jesus had said to have lived in the mountains for enlightenment purposes. By going to the mountains, we connect to these energies, which can enhance our holistic health, our consciousness, and our quality of life.

Yoga

Yoga is an ancient Indian exercise for mind, body, and soul. It means calming down the different states of consciousness within the physical and spiritual bodies. It also means union with the divine the practice of Yoga leads to the union of the individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, which results in a perfect harmony between the mind and body. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be in yoga, and is termed as a yogi, having attained to a state of freedom referred to as, nirvana or moksha. Thus, the aim of Yoga is Self-realization, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation' (Moksha) or 'freedom' (Kaivalya). Living with freedom, health and harmony is the main goal of Yoga practice.

History

Yoga is believed to have originated with the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born. In many Ancient Hindu texts, the yogic lore starts with Shiva, who is seen as the first Yogi.

Other accounts relate to events that happened thousands of years ago on the banks

of the lake Kantisarovar in the Himalayas, Shiva the first yogi poured his knowledge into the legendary Saptarishis, who are the mystical "seven sages". The sages were given the task of carrying this powerful yogic science to different parts of the world. However, it was in India that the yogic system found its fullest expression. Several seals and fossil remain of Indus Saraswathi valley civilization with Yogic motives and figures performing yoga indicate the presence of Yoga in the Indian Sub-continent. This indicates the presence of Yoga in ancient India/Pakistan. The phallic symbols, seals of idols of mother Goddess are suggestive of Tantra Yoga. Presence of Yoga is available in folk traditions, Indus valley civilization, Vedic and Upanishadic heritage, Buddhist, and Jain traditions, Darshana's, epics of Mahabharat and Ramayana.

In addition, there was a primordial pure Yoga which has been manifested in mystical traditions of South Asia. Yoga was embedded in their daily rituals, and the sun was given highest importance during. Pranayama exercises were also performed daily. Though Yoga was being practiced in the pre-Vedic period, the great Sage Maharshi Patanjali systematized and codified the then existing practices of Yoga, its meaning, and its related knowledge through his Yoga Sutras. After Patanjali, many Sages and Yoga Masters contributed to the preservation and development of this philosophy.Other historical sources on yoga come from the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis, teachings of Buddhism, Jainism, Panini, Purana literature. Between 500 BC - 800 A.D. Yoga was developed further through the commentaries of Vyasa's Yoga Sutras, and the teachings of Mahavir and Buddha. The concept of Five great vows by Mahavir and the eightfold path by Buddha greatly influence the development and practice of Yoga.

Further in the Bhagavat Gita the concept of Gyan yoga, Bhakti yoga and Karma Yoga are presented. These three types of yoga are discussed which reveal the highest standards of human wisdom and peace, which can be developed through the daily practice of the contemplation of yoga philosophy.

In Modern times, yoga practices are a daily practice for most individuals who are geared towards the preservation, maintenance, and promotion of health. Yoga has spread all over the world.

Yoga in Practice

The goal of yoga is to integrate the different aspects of our life, such as our physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual and to find union with the divine and all there is. To be one with yourself is healthy, but to be one with all the universe is bliss. Francoise Barbira, says in "The Practical Encyclopedia of Yoga & Pilates," that,

"Yoga is a practical philosophy, not a religion, and requires no allegiance to any particular system of belief. The word "yoga" comes from the Sanskrit word "yug", meaning to join, yoke, or unite. It is traditional Indian Philosophy that involves the integration of the physical and spiritual to achieve a sense of well-being. This synthesis and inseparability of the body and mind leads to a greater connection to

one's consciousness. In the practice of yoga, the body is linked to the movement, mind, and breath to bring about a feeling of balance, relaxation, and harmony."

The practice of yoga is done through postures called asanas, which work to improve muscle tone, strength, and well-being. There are many forms and postures involved in the practice of yoga. Yoga has eight major limbs, which are Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharan, Dhyana, Samadhi.

Yama is control of the muscular system through postures and breathing exercises. Niyama is going with the flow of one posture to the other. For example, to dance a choreographed dance, the dancers must first have a structure of the controlled movements. Then, when the dance is performed, the dancers let go and move with the flow of the music. The planning of the dance is the Yama practice, while the expression of the music into movement is Niyama.

Asana and Pranayama are the next two limbs of yoga. Asana is the act of controlling the muscular system and the mind. The main purpose is to achieve increased focus and concentration when practicing any posture. Whereas Pranayama is controlling the breath processes. The breath should be controlled by inhaling and exhaling each for a certain number of seconds.

- *Pratyahara is practicing introspection or focusing within to achieve a balanced psychological state.*
- *Dharana can be called meditation and is the focus of the mind's consciousness on any one object in your imagination.*
- *Dhyana is a state in which all the muscles in your body spontaneously relax, it is considered a timeless state, where things and space do not exist. It is a state where one is in unity with the divine.*
- *Samadhi is the final state of being, which is being at one with the universe, one with the divine, as well as one with everything around you.*

These eight limbs of yoga can be used in all forms of exercise and all movements in our daily life. The techniques might take a while to get used to, but practice makes perfect. The more you practice the more you will be able to achieve the wisdom behind the principles of yoga. The key is dedication and devotion to the practice of any exercise. Yogis use yoga in every moment and the life-force energy, Prana flows through them constantly. As a result, they are more energized, aware, and serene. Their minds are calmed, and spirits are brightened.

Pilates

Pilates is a great way to condition the physical body to increase in core strength, flexibility, muscular tone, basically overall fitness, and well-being. The philosophy of Pilates fitness was first introduced by Joseph Pilates, to overcome imbalances, injuries, and bad habits of an unhealthy body. He uses controlled postures and breathing to re-align the body back to health. Joseph Pilates experienced health problems in his childhood. He was inspired to heal himself

through the philosophies of Yoga, Zen Buddhists, Bodybuilding, Martial arts, and the Greek ideal of the integrated human. He concentrated on creating a fitness program that used mind-body healing.

There are six principles of Pilates that create Pilates movements:

1. *The first is Movement Center, the place from where all your movements emanate. These are the abdomen, hips, lower back, buttocks. All body movements use these centers. So, when practicing a Pilates move bring your awareness to these centers.*
2. *Movement Control means bringing your body into the correct alignment, which creates strength, good posture, and easy movement of the limbs.*
3. *Movement Flow concentrates on flowing from one movement to the other, with the correct alignment of the physical body. The focus is on the quality of each movement.*
4. *Pilates's breathing is focused from the rib cage, which is said to have circulated the blood more efficiently, thus creating vitality and increased stamina. A calmed full inhale and exhale pattern is beneficial in creating a perfect movement. Diaphragmatic Breathing Techniques can be used to increase the benefits of Pilates movement. The website, https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/9445-diaphragmatic-breathing, states that,*

"…you can try the diaphragmatic breathing technique while sitting in a chair, as shown below. To perform this exercise while sitting in a chair:

- *Sit comfortably, with your knees bent and your shoulders, head, and neck relaxed.*
- *Place one hand on your upper chest and the other just below your rib cage. This will allow you to feel your diaphragm move as you breathe.*
- *Breathe in slowly through your nose so that your stomach moves out against your hand. The hand on your chest should remain as still as possible.*
- *Tighten your stomach muscles, letting them fall inward as you exhale through pursed lips. The hand on your upper chest must remain as still as possible.*

Note: You may notice an increased effort will be needed to use the diaphragm correctly. First, you will probably get tired while doing this exercise. But keep at it, because with continued practice, diaphragmatic breathing will become easy and automatic."

This exercise can be done lying down also. You can practice this exercise for 5-10 minutes, each time.

5. *The next principles of Pilates are Precision. Be precise in your movements by imagining all the details of the movement in your mind first and then performing them.*
6. *Concentration in the movement requires your full attention to the exercise.*

Pilates are a great way to tone and condition the body, without vigorous exercise.

Life-Force Energy – Qi (Chi) Fitness

Another important aspect of spiritual and physical health and wellness is Life-force Energy, also known as prana, Qi (Chi). Life-force energy is in everything, and this energy is life itself, it is what makes one a living being. Ken Cohen says in "The Way of Qigong", that,

"Qi is an invisible subtle force. We know it exists the same way we know sunlight and wind exist."

Qigong

The art of using, cultivating, and maintain the life-force energy has been used by the Asian cultures for centuries. They have developed tranquil techniques of relaxing and cultivating Qi in the form of Qigong, as well as fighting techniques such as king fu. Yoga postures are also designed to enhance the pranic forces, the life energy force of the body.

To start a routine for life-force health one needs to practice exercises such as Meditation, and Qigong to achieve knowledge and wisdom of this force. In Qigong, simple repetitive movements are used for being, feeling, moving, and creating Qi. Roger Jahnke says in his book, "The Healing Promise of Qi," that,

"For people with health challenges as well as those who simply wish to increase their personal energy and inner calm, ancient Chinese Qigong could be the gift of a lifetime."

History of Qigong

The origins of Qigong date back thousands of years. Studies have revealed that ancient ceremonial dances carried out by tribes in various parts of China developed onto exercises for health and well-being. It is believed that specific rhythms and movements of the dances were developed to strengthen the dancers, both physically and mentally.

As time moved, the original dance movements were systemized into health exercises that could be practiced every day. One of China's legendary founding emperors Huang Di (the Yellow Emperor) is said to have practiced Qigong daily and as a result to have lived healthily for well over one hundred years.

Later, many Chinese sages and scholars developed various practices and philosophies who tried to use Qigong, along with diets, and herbs etc., as a means to achieve immortality – it was reported that many of them lived to a remarkable age. One of the main insights they left behind was that the "elixir of life" resides

within each of us, and that by cultivating it regularly, everybody can achieve health and longevity.

Since that time, various systems of Qigong have emerged, including the 8 Pieces of Silk Brocade, which, today, is still one of the most common practice exercise. They are usually attributed to General Yue Fei (1177–1279 AD) who is said to have developed them to train his army – and it is said also that thanks to these powerful exercises it was never defeated.

Over the millennia, Qigong has been practiced by intellectuals, monks, warriors, and ordinary people mainly for three different purposes: martial, medical, or meditative. Many schools teach the 8 Pieces of Silk Brocade and other exercises to give students a solid grounding in Qigong. After that, and if they so wish, students are welcome to explore any of the other aspects of this marvelous practice.

Qigong can be done by a person of any age, but children usually find it to be boring, thus they will not be able to feel the flow of Qi. It takes truly little space and no equipment. Also, the series of moves can be done quickly or can be done for a long period for different effects.

The mental state becomes very serene, with much emphasis on the mental goal, which is to relax the mind by silencing the thoughts. The rush of Qi will create a feeling of euphoria. Spiritually this practice will allow the chakras to open and universal energy to flow.

The website https://www.livescience.com/38192-qigong.html describes this form of exercise meditation as,

“Qigong (pronounced chee-gong) is an ancient Chinese exercise and healing technique that involves meditation, controlled breathing and movement exercises. The character "Qi" that makes up the first part of qigong is a difficult word to translate, according to Peter Wayne, an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and the research director at Harvard's Osher Center for Integrative Medicine. Qi is a concept from traditional Chinese culture that roughly means vital energy, information, breath, or spirit. The second character in qigong, "gong," means cultivation or mastery, Wayne said. Qigong is therefore sometimes translated as "vital energy cultivation" or "mastery of your energy."

There are many forms of qigong practiced throughout the world. Some of these forms involve breathing and meditation to promote spirituality and health while others are more vigorous and include martial arts exercises. Tai chi, a widely practiced mind-body exercise, is sometimes referred to as a form of qigong because it "cultivates, moves and helps manage Qi," “

The same website goes on to describe one of the most common type of qigong called Baduanjin qigong. This exercise has eight movements, known as the Eight Pieces of Brocade, or Fabric. The movements are as follows: Pressing the Heavens with Two Hands, Drawing the Bowstring and Letting the Arrows Fly, Separating Heaven and Earth, Wise Owl Gazes Backward, Punching with Angry

Gaze, bouncing on the Toes, Big Bear Turns from Side to Side, and Touching the Toes Then Bending Backwards.

Other forms of qigong practices include;

- *Ershibashi (28 Step Qigong): This Qigong sequence has soft and flowing movements which are based on Tai Chi. Each movement has many health benefits.*
- *Tai Chi Breaths: These are 8 exercises which help to develop awareness of the body and feeling of Qi.*
- *Elemental Breaths: These are basic visualizations and breathing exercises which help to purify the mind and heart. They help to release anxiety and transform negative emotions into positive ones.*
- *Zhan Zhuang: This is a sequence of standing meditation postures, which is essential to the practice of Qigong and Tai Chi. Practiced regularly, Zhan Zhuang postures help to develop concentration and mental and physical strength. They are the basis of developing internal energy.*

Qigong is easy to learn and enjoyable to do. Even a few minutes of practice can have an invigorating and rejuvenating effect. Regular practice brings about a deep strengthening effect for the whole body and its various systems such as the nervous, digestive, respiratory, skeleton-muscular, hormonal, gynecological, etc. Its ability to help in healing a large variety of chronic and acute injuries and illnesses has been the subject of various research programs led by the Chinese medical authorities.

The aim of Qigong is to promote the movement of Qi (energy) in the body; this is done by opening certain gates and stretching and twisting energy channels. A key point in Qigong practice is relaxation and deep breathing, both of which are prerequisites to allow Qi to flow.

Some Qigong movements are very gentle, others more vigorous. Some movements are exceptionally large and expansive, others are more subtle, almost imperceptible. All are different and have an extremely specific effect on body and mind. The deeper one practices, the more one can understand the purpose of each movement, allowing the Qigong practice to become ever more enjoyable.

Tai Chi

Tai Chi is another exercise that allows the cultivation of Qi (chi). The movements are based on aspects of nature. The fluid, easy movements stretch the body mechanics without straining them. These easy movements can then be transferred to your everyday life to make every action seem effortless.

Anyone can practice this ancient exercise. The slow and smooth movements of tai chi is good for calming the body and senses, thus giving numerous health and wellness benefits. On the other hand, it can also be practiced as a martial arts

technique by using fast, fluid, fighting movements. Practicing Tai Chi can change your life for the better. Tai Chi can enhance your balance, coordination, and flexibility if practiced daily as a way of life. The Tai Chi postures help circulate Qi in different parts of the body and when done correctly Tai Chi can make any movement effortless. This allows the Qi to flow freely through the body, creating movement out of stillness. Tai Chi will also keep Chi and blood flowing harmoniously throughout the body and chakra systems.

History

Tai Chi, also known as Shadow Boxing, is a major traditional Chinese martial art. The term, "Tai Chi," was first known in written references in the Book of Changes, which was over 3000 years ago, during the Zhou Dynasty (1100-1221 BC). In this book it says that "in all changes exists Tai Chi, which causes the two opposites in everything." Tai Chi means the ultimate of ultimate, often used to describe the vastness of the universe.

The essential principles of Tai Chi are based on the ancient Chinese philosophy of Taoism, which stresses the natural balance in all things and the need for living in spiritual and physical accord with the patterns of nature. According to this philosophy, everything is composed of two opposites, but entirely complementary, elements of yin and yang, working in a relationship which is in perpetual balance. Tai Chi consists of exercises equally balanced between yin and yang, which is why it is so remarkably effective.

Yin and yang are opposites and are found in all things in life. In nature, everything tends toward a natural state of harmony. Likewise, yin and yang are always in total balance. Concepts such as soft, pliant, yielding, and feminine are associated with yin, while concepts such as hard, rigid, and masculine are associated with yang. Both sides complement each other completely and together form a perfect whole. Things which are perfectly balanced and in harmony are at peace, which leads naturally to holistic health and well-being.

It is almost impossible to separate Chinese martial art history from legend. Legends hold interesting and useful messages. The real origins of Tai Chi are shrouded in mystery. But the legendary accounts date back as far as the 15th century, to a legendary figure, Zhang Shan Feng, who was a famous Taoist priest. He was believed to possess super-human ability and immense internal power.

The physical techniques of tai chi are described in the "T'ai-chi classics", a set of writings by traditional masters, to increase flexibility of the joints based on coordination and relaxation, rather than muscular tension. The slow, repetitive movements gently open the internal circulation chi.

Other accounts of Tai Chi, date back to Chen Wang ting, a 16th century Royal Guard of the Chen village in Wenxian County, Henan Province. After retiring from the army, he was drawn to the teachings of Taoism, which led him to a simple life of farming, studying, and teaching martial arts. Chen Wangting developed the Chen

Style Tai Chi which is characterized by contrasting and complimentary movements- slow and soft versus fast and hard. It contains explosive power and low stances. Chen style is a more difficult and physically demanding style than the other styles. Tai Chi was further learnt and modified by Yang Lu-Chan from the Chen village. He reinvented an easier style that used higher stances, gentle and slow movements, making it much more suitable for everyone.

As time turned, the style evolved from the Yang and Chen styles to three other major styles – Wu, Hao, and Sun. Each of these Tai Chi styles share similar principles but contain different movements and characteristics. Tai chi has evolved into a graceful form of exercise that is now used for stress reduction and a variety of other health conditions. It is often described as meditation in motion, tai chi promotes serenity through gentle, flowing movements.

Health Benefits

Today, Tai Chi practiced as a graceful form of exercise. It involves a series of movements performed in a slow, focused manner and accompanied by deep breathing.

The website https://www.verywellhealth.com/the-benefits-of-tai-chi-89962,

“Tai chi is a mind-body practice that involves a series of slow, flowing exercises that combine movement, meditation, and rhythmic breathing. Although it was initially developed as a martial art, it is commonly practiced as a form of "moving meditation." According to the principles of traditional Chinese medicine, tai chi's movements can help stimulate the flow of vital energy (also known as "chi") and, in turn, promote healing from a variety of health conditions. Many practitioners of tai chi use this technique to enhance physical and mental health, as well as to improve posture, balance, flexibility, and strength. In addition, tai chi is said to boost mood, alleviate pain, strengthen the immune system, and improve heart health.”

Another website https://www.healthline.com/health/exercise-fitness/tai-chi-moves#benefits,describe the many holistic benefits of tai chi.

“The benefits of tai chi encompass everything from mental, physical, and emotional benefits to spiritual and healing benefits. While not an exhaustive list, the following are some of the more well-known mental and physical benefits of tai chi. It is a safe and effective form of physical fitness for beginners. If you are new to exercise or just new to this form of fitness, the slow, low-impact movements are safe and gentle on your body and help increase flexibility and posture.

- *Manage stress-related anxiety by integrating the relaxation and stretching benefits right into the movement. You will learn how to relax and move slowly through the movements while breathing.*
- *Improve your mood. Tai chi may be effective in reducing depressive symptoms, anxiety, and mood disorders.*

- *Better sleep. Practicing tai chi on a regular basis may contribute to a more restful sleep.*
- *Adaptable. Tai chi is both gentle and slow, which makes it easily adaptable to many fitness levels and health conditions.*
- *Improved Posture. Through the slow and deliberate flow of the moves, the practice of tai chi helps improve posture and body alignment.*
- *Pain Relief. Engaging in tai chi can improve the symptoms that result from fibromyalgia. Studies have shown that a daily routine of tai chi exercises will ease the pain for people with fibromyalgia.*

In a nutshell the philosophy of tai chi involves three main aspects:

- *General Health: An individual may find it difficult to meditate to a state of calmness or to use tai chi as a martial art. Therefore, using the Tai chi's exercises help them relieve the physical effects of stress on the body and mind.*
- *Moving Meditation: The focus and calmness cultivated by the meditative aspect of tai chi is seen as necessary in maintaining optimum health, relieving stress, and maintaining harmonious energy levels.*
- *Self-Defense: The ability to use tai chi as a form of self-defense. This is usually done by using Tai chi as a form of combative exercises such as the study of yielding and sticking to an incoming attack rather than attempting to meet it with opposing force. The use of tai chi as a martial art is quite challenging and requires a great deal of training. When used as a martial arts' move, Tai Chi can be applied to a situation of self-defense or fighting. The techniques of martial arts are used for personal development, self-realization, and enlightenment, as the fighting part of martial arts has decreased in our current time. Even though martial arts are generally a combative technique, hidden within its teachings, postures, and movements is the knowledge to free oneself from anger, illusion, and emotional blockages. It is another form of spiritual enlightenment.*

Running/Jogging

Jogging and running are exercises people have done often, and for some, it is a form of exercise they have done all their life. Running or jogging gets your blood flowing along with your life-force energy, chi. Chi will help open your chakras, and as a result, greater amounts of energy will flow into your energy centers. As a result, you experience more vitality and invigoration to your heart, mind, body, and soul.

Running at full speed will increase your heart rate and increase your deep breathing pattern. Thus, your brain receives more oxygen and adrenaline. This gives a feeling of joy and happiness. Jogging is usually done at a slower pace, than running. The heart rate is gradually brought to a healthy level, with the same results as running and walking.

Further, your chakras and subtle bodies can channel greater amounts or levels of energy from the universe. If you put your consciousness into these channels of energy, then your soul will grow to a higher level as you run. With each step allow energy to pour into all your chakras. Your spirit can connect to greater depths and time and space can bend within your body, allowing you to run with universal energy, instead of exerting your reserve of energy.

Sprinting is another form of running as rapidly as possible for a short distance. This requires strength instead of endurance. Warming up is especially important in sprinting, jogging, or running, to avoid leg injury. Whereas Cross country running is a slow-paced jog and requires endurance not strength. Like this is Distant Running. Steven I. Subotnick says in his book, "Sports and Exercise Injuries," that, "Running gets me back in touch with my soul." So, if you use this form of exercise, run for your soul and your connection to the earth and divine. Make it a joyful experience.

A famous Canadian Athlete, humanitarian, and runner made a worldwide legacy of running for cancer. The website https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Fox, says that,

*"Terrance Stanley Fox (July 28, 1958 – June 28, 1981) was a Canadian athlete, humanitarian, and **cancer research** activist. In 1980, with one leg having been amputated due to cancer, he embarked on an east to west cross-Canada run to raise money and awareness for cancer research. Although the spread of his cancer eventually forced him to end his quest after 143 days and 5,373 kilometers (3,339 mi), and ultimately cost him his life, his efforts resulted in a lasting, worldwide legacy. The annual Terry Fox Run, first held in 1981, has grown to involve millions of participants in over 60 countries and is now the world's largest one-day fundraiser for cancer research; over C$ 750 million has been raised in his name, as of January 2018."*

Bicycling and Spin Classes

Another common form of exercise is cycling and spin classes. Cycling is a repetitive exercise, it allows the mind plenty of time to contemplate other things and relax, which is similar to chanting mantras or the rosary. It creates the same state of mind. Cycling allows people to focus on their energy, breathing, and pushing their limits. It is a casual activity which focuses on improving one's mood, as opposed to an exercise that is competitive. Furthermore, cycling outdoors can be a great way to connect with nature, smell the flowers, enjoy the pleasant day. Which is an ideal setting for unwinding and relieving stressing. Setting goals for yourself on your bicycle or exploring a new trail with friends can quickly jumpstart your mental wellness, allowing you to feel physically fit and mentally free.

Other beneficial forms of exercise are, rock climbing, swimming, weight training, track and field, all kinds of sports, martial arts, etc. All can be used to gain holistic fitness benefits. All forms of exercise can be beneficial, and all kinds of

movement can be developed and used to create a stronger body, mind, heart, and spirit connection.

Design your true form of exercise, or workout program, let your true self be your guide. You do not have to follow any type of exercise regime if you are not satisfied with it. Be creative and design your routine according to your expression of movements, create your own dance that works perfectly with you. Mold the exercise to your liking. Take the time to eat a balanced diet, relax your mind, love yourself, enlighten your spirit and exercise your body. Then you are bound to live a complete and full life. Eventually you can make every movement of your day an important exercise as well as taking the time to work out physically. When your thoughts, feelings, body, and spirit are in resonance with each other you will have achieved holistic health.

Conclusion

The knowledge of Holistic Fitness can be found all over the internet, in fitness, holistic healing books, but the wisdom is useless if you do not act upon it. Practice to make yourself perfect. Apply the knowledge to your life and you will gain the needed wisdom to improve your life.

Holistic Fitness can improve your life in every way. You become stronger emotionally, mentally, and spiritually as well as physically. Your strength, endurance, dexterity, and tranquility are increased. You feel more invigorated, and full of life. Your emotional and mental states are balanced and relaxed. Your spirit is uplifted thus you have enhanced the quality of life and consciousness.

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Holistic Detox
By Saiyra Akbar & Shahir Ali A

In this course, we will discuss the benefits of detoxing the body for mind, body, and spirit. An important part of holistic health is cleansing and fasting. This can have a positive effect on one's overall well-being. Mental clarity, happiness, and healing experiences can be some of the benefits of cleansing the body. Besides, the physical body needs to rejuvenate. In our society where we consume unhealthy and fast food daily, along with other non-healthy foods and drinks, our bodies have become out-of-balance, unhealthy and stressed. In the "Detox Diet", Elson M. Haas and Daniella Chase talk about destructive habits that arise from excessive food eating, chemical, and drugs. "Abuses and addictions touch almost every person's life. I realize these habits are as much a part of our social and cultural upbringing, as they are of our responses to dealing with the stresses of family, school, work, our local environment, and society at large. Food choices are especially a challenge for so many overweight and obese people and are expanding and becoming a significant issue for many of us across all age groups, from young to old. Truly, finding the right, supportive, and balanced diet is a dilemma for most everyone. I do not want you to feel bad or weak or self-conscious if any of these potentially destructive habits applies to you. I know the struggle between light and dark, between picking up that bag of cookies or chips, that cup of coffee or glass of wine or pack of cigarettes-and the desire to stop. I also know it is an incredible challenge to change anything, particularly to stop any addiction we have relied upon for many years." Haas goes on to explain that to improve your health, you must eliminate the destructive habits, which are the source of bad health and many diseases.

One way to eliminate destructive habits is through the process of Cleansing and fasting. These methods have been used as medicine for the body in many cultures and civilizations. Fasting holds an important place in most world religions and cultures. It is a way for people to deepen their communication with the Divine through purifying their bodies and tuning their life-force energy. Cleansing practices can be found in traditional wellness regimes, such as the Ayurvedic Systems from India. Although still practiced throughout the world, cleansing and fasting do not hold a medicinal role in the Western mainstream culture. Instead, people tend to overeat food and indulge in snacks or continually try to limit their food intake through dieting. Both ways of using food do not include a sense of food being our medicine.

Many of our eating habits do not consider the relationship of mind, body, and soul, whereas many religions and health system do honor this relationship and put great emphasis on what one consumes, because it affects their thoughts, emotions, and spirituality.

The Essenes, a community that lived near Jerusalem and authored the Dead Sea Scrolls, believed, in the teaching of Jesus, which emphasized the use of cleansing, fasting, and eating raw foods to maintain good health and well-being. Each culture has its system of eating for health and well-being, the Indians have Ayurveda, which is designed to bring harmony to the mind, body, and soul, whereas the Muslims and Jews eat kosher (halal meats) and abstaining from intoxicating foods and drinks. In this course, I will discuss several types of cleanses and fasts which can assist in the process of elimination of toxins from the body, as well as additional exercises to enhance the detoxification process. This course will empower you to make healthy choices for yourself. It will give you the knowledge and understanding of cleansing and fasting through information.

Please keep in mind that the information contained in this course is not intended to treat, diagnose, cure, or prevent any diseases. It is designed for informational purposes only.

Toxic Environments

Many people live day to day with symptoms of toxicity, which they regard as being normal feelings for their bodies. They have adapted to the idea of living with symptoms of toxicity as if it is the natural way to live. Phyllis Saifer and Merla Zellerbach explain in their book "Detox," that, "These individuals think that everyone is drowsy after meals, wakes up with a slight headache, or feels claustrophobic around smokers."

We just accept it as a part of aging, but it does not have to be that way. We can learn to make changes in the way we eat and live. Today many people grow up taking in moderate to high levels of toxins and have thus never experienced life without them. A toxin has been defined by Elson Hass in the book, "The Detox Diet," as, "any substance that creates irritating and/or harmful effects to the body, undermining our health and stressing our biochemical or organ functions."

Toxins come from both, what we consciously put into our bodies and from the environment we live in. Feelings of sluggishness, constipation, headaches, and other symptoms of toxicity do not have to be a part of our daily lives. We can take control back into our lives by making healthy eating choices, detoxification, and avoiding pharmaceutical drugs. Instead turn to natural, holistic ways to prevent diseases, such as healthy diets and detoxification processes. To come back to health, we must personally wish to reclaim our perfect health, we must stop using drugs and chemicals, that pollute, suppress, and weaken our bodies. We must return to natural methods that our Creator designed; and that means using herbs and other natural methods that cleanse, purify, and strengthen the body.

Main Types of Toxins

The first step in cleansing and purifying our bodies is to identify the sources of the toxins that are causing us to feel sluggish, drowsy, giving us headaches, fatigue, heartburn, and many others. These symptoms if not taken care of will progress into illnesses. Phyllis Saifer and Merla Zellerbach say in their book,

"Detox," that, there are three main types of toxins that enter the human body. These are called ingestants, inhalants, and contactants.

Ingestants are toxins entered by the mouth, through the foods and drinks we ingest. Commercial food use fertilizers, pesticides, and other sprays that contain many chemicals. Pesticides use arsenic, a deadly poison, as the main active ingredient, which are used to kill insects in the agriculture process of food. If this can kill insects, what is it doing to the human bodies? Water is often a source of toxins as well. Water can be polluted with chemicals coming from the rub-off of pesticides into streams, dumping into rivers, and the addition of chlorine. Chlorine is another dangerous toxin that we ingest into our bodies without knowing. Chlorine began to be used during World War I for gas warfare. Dr. Richard Anderson in his book, "Cleanse & Purify Thyself," says that, Chlorine is one of the leading toxins that causes cancer.

Inhalants are another dangerous toxin that works on the human body slowly through the air we breathe in daily. The air we all breathe in contains ozone, carbon monoxide, fine particles, sulfur dioxide, and lead in addition to the oxygen that we need. A human breathes in approximately 15, 000 liters per day. So, the level of inhalants taken daily may be high for many humans today.

Contactants are toxins that enter the body through the skin such as cosmetics, soaps, perfumes, laundry detergents, and lotions. These are toxins that enter the body through the skin. The skin is the largest organ for detoxification of the human body. Anything that is not organic will contain chemicals because the plants used to make the products will have been sprayed with pesticides. In addition, many other chemicals are often added to non-organic products. Organic products offer a solution for those who can afford it.

In looking at these three types of toxins, only some specific toxins have been identified. It is important to remember that there may likely be a larger amount of toxins present than known, and some of them are unseen (and un-smelled) pollutants that no one is aware of. Keeping these toxins in mind we can learn to make healthy choices when purchasing and using products, and food items. Being more aware of our choices will enhance the quality of our life.

Detoxification Systems of the Body

To stay in optimal health, all the major systems of the body need to be cleansed and detoxed. These are the gastrointestinal tract, which includes the urinary tract, colon, gallbladder, and liver. The urinary tract further consists of the kidney, ureters, bladder, and urethra. The Respiratory tract is composed of lungs, bronchial tubes, throat, sinuses, and nose. The lymphatic tract includes the lymph nodes. The last system is our skin and its dermal systems. Our bodies become toxic when we overeat or use too many prescription drugs and other substances. When our bodies are toxic, they try to handle toxins by responding in three ways: neutralizing, transforming, and eliminating. Elson Hass states in his book, The Detox Diet that,

"I believe that proper detoxification begins with understanding gastrointestinal function and the effect on overall health. You will find that these guidelines, when combined with regular exercise, will improve your health, vitality, and the functioning of your gastrointestinal tract. This reduces the chance of degenerative and chronic diseases and helps slow the aging process. Remember, prevention is the key! Some of the important nutrients for healing the GI tract include the amino acid L-glutamine, pantothenic acid, zinc, vitamin A, antioxidants (such as vitamins C and E, beta-carotene, and selenium), the bioflavonoid quercitin, essential fatty acids, inulin, and fiber (particularly the soluble kind). Herbs such as aloe vera, licorice root, and comfrey root also have positive healing effects on the mucosal lining of the gastrointestinal tract. These nutrients play a key role in GI mucosal cell differentiation growth, function, and repair."

The vitamins C & E, along with zinc, selenium, and carotene, all help to neutralize free-radical agents. The process in the liver takes the toxins and changes them into harmless parts, which go into the blood and are transported to the kidneys. In addition, the skin eliminates toxins by sweating, or by the liver releasing them from the bile it creates.

Symptoms That We Are Toxic

So, how does one know that they are toxic? The basic symptoms of toxicity are headaches, bad breath, allergies, nausea, fatigue, anxiety, joint pains, sore throat, frequent colds, constipation, etc. Many health problems are arising from a toxic body, such as allergies, headaches, heart disease, cancer, liver problems, kidney stones, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, menstrual problems, etc.

The purpose of cleansing and detoxification is to eliminate the source of disease and symptoms. This can be further enhanced by eating and maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle. Elson M. Hass says in his book, The Detox Diet, that, "Put simply, the key to maintaining metabolic balance is to maximize nutrition and to eliminate toxins."

The disease cycle starts when the body, especially the gastrointestinal tract is overburdened with an acidic diet, negative thoughts and emotions, environmental pollution, radiation, low oxygen, and de-hydration. These substances and conditions change the body by making it more acidic. Elson Hass says in the same book, "The Detox Diet", that the gastrointestinal tract is stressed by the following:

- *refined foods and sugar*
- *excess fatty and rich food*
- *overeating and failing to chew more than once or twice per mouthful of food*
- *drinking too much with meals, thus diluting our digestive juices and reducing our ability to properly break down food.*

- *Food, chemicals and pesticides, and environmental toxins.*
- *The persistent use of alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine.*
- *Use of prescriptions, over the counter, and recreational drugs.*
- *Lack of fiber, and whole foods, specifically lack of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes in the diet.*

Research has further indicated that disease starts in the use of sugar and other acidic food. In ancient times these were non-existent, but since the twentieth century (1900) there has been a shift toward unnatural drugs and processed foods, both of which cause our bodies to become filled with toxic waste. In our modern society, we have drifted away from natural health products. Pharmaceutical companies support the use of drugs as a cure for mental and physical distress. But we can choose wisely.

Elson M. Hass says in the "Detox Diet", that,

"I believe that patients and physicians alike should be oriented to live and practice with a commonsense approach that first looks at lifestyle as a place to promote rejuvenation, then to natural therapies, and finally to pharmaceutical drugs and surgery. Lifestyle factors include diet, exercise, stress management, and attitudes. Natural therapies include supplements, herbs, homeopathic, and hands-on healing such as massage, osteopathy, and chiropractic. Pharmaceutical drugs or surgery are appropriate when a situation is acute or severe, or if natural therapies are not working."

Food can also be used to attain health and well-being, and for detoxification purposes. By choosing to eat certain foods and herbs, it is possible to first eliminate any toxins in our bodies, and then prevent toxins from building up. David Wolfe, an expert on the raw food diet encourages people to seek high states of physical, mental, and spiritual wellness to experience vitality and rejuvenation. His website https://davidwolfe.com has many amazing recipes to try and adopt.

If we continue with our unhealthy diet, along with using pharmaceutical drugs, we most likely will follow the same path that many have followed, which have led to difficulties in their final years of life. Detoxing through the process of cleansing and fasting can provide effective, alternative methods of releasing toxins, and pent-up emotional blockages causing disease. We can learn to live a healthier lifestyle.

The Benefits of Detoxification

There are many benefits of detoxification of our bodies. By cleansing and fasting, we can achieve a balance in our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual levels. Both cleansing and fasting serve to detoxify our bodies by releasing, neutralizing, or transforming toxins. All these processes clear the build-up of mucus that occurs when our bodies are toxic. Elson M. Hass says in "The Detox Diet", that,

“We detoxify/cleanse for health, vitality and rejuvenation-to clear symptoms, treat disease, and prevent future problems.”

In “The Essene Gospel of Peace,” Jesus talks of the prayer, he says that all evil, which are toxins, shall leave the body through its organs of elimination. The Essene Gospel of Peace quotes Jesus as saying that once all toxins are cleansed from one’s body, “Your blood shall become as pure as our Earthly Mother’s blood and as the river’s foam sporting in the sunlight. And your breath shall become as pure as the flesh of fruits reddening upon the leaves of trees; the light of your eye as clear and bright as the brightness of the sun shining upon the blue sky.”

There are many benefits to detoxification, such as feeling more energized and active, it gives our stressed digestive system a break. Skin clears up, decrease in skin problems, youthful appearance, immune system is rejuvenated, and the eliminative functions achieve optimal health. Weight loss is another important benefit of detoxification. Toxins accumulate and get stored in fatty tissues, therefore when we detox, we release those toxins and thus fat. We can reach our desired weight and feel good about ourselves. Many people become more creative, begin to find their sole purpose, spiritual, enhanced relationships, more conscious and aware of the moment they are in.

Disease needs to be looked at not only from the physical level but from the emotional level as well. Both emotions and mental patterns are sources of disease. The food we eat directly influences our thoughts and emotions. When people feel sad, depressed, or stressed they may turn toward comfort foods such as sweets with high sugar content and fried foods. These foods are acidic and then when eaten with the emotional component of being, sad, depressed, or stressed, leaves a residue upon our cells causing emotional mucoid plaque to form. Instead of being resolved and released from the body, those emotions get trapped in our bodies and cells. This further affects our body, glands, immune system, mind, heart, and other organs.

Richard Anderson says in his book,” Cleanse and Purify Thyself,” that,

“There is a residue, a substance that attaches itself to our cells and organs and causes malfunctions. I will call it ‘Emotional Plaque’. It is not visible to physical sight and we cannot see it under the microscope, but it is there, nevertheless. It is like a magnet; in that it attracts toxic physical substances to it which appears to be the physical cause of disease. But the main point is, mucus and toxins are held in place by this undetected residue created by negative consciousness. This emotional plaque contains consciousness in the form of unconscious memories, attitudes, and feelings, like a radio wave, it continues to send out messages, and draws to itself conditions like its nature. Create enough of these and you will have habits. Habits create consistency and consistency creates persistent manifestations. The greatest downfall in medicine is the failure to recognize this emotional plaque and the lack of knowledge of how to remove it. And how do we remove it? By first eliminating judgment, refining true discernment, focusing on the beauty in life, practicing gratitude, appreciation, kindness, and love, while at the same time cleansing the body and feeding it pure foods. “

The practice of fasting and cleansing can provide a time of rejuvenation for the mind, body, and spirit. Fasting can be used to prevent illnesses and control appetites and overeating habits. Excess foods and eating habits can cause degenerative diseases, such as heart diseases, cancer, and diabetes. Fasting can help conditions where the body feels very congested, due to constipation and excess nutrition.

Gabriel Cousens says in his book, "Conscious Eating", that,

"Fasting allows our physical bodies to turn to the assimilation of divine or cosmic energy rather than biochemical energy."

Bad eating habits, addictions to food and drinks can be controlled by the realization that the energy of the universe is sustaining the body, not the food energy. Fasting for a few days releases the blocked energy and congestion of the physical body, allowing the life-force energy to flow more freely. Thus, Regular fasting enables the body to bring on a spiritual rebirth.

Another vital aspect of detoxification is the environment we detoxify in. One's environment can hold a range of toxic energies to healing energies, which depends on the individual's definition of each. For some people, a small amount of clutter and disorganization can cause stress, while for others it may be comforting. Any stresses in one's environment should optimally be alleviated before starting a detoxification process.

A toxic environment can create a resonance with the toxins in a person's body making it more difficult to continue with the detoxification process. On the other hand, an environment that is healing and inspiring may help a person in times of doubt. Each person has different needs when cleansing and fasting, and so it is essential to listen to one's body before and during these processes.

Take time off work, create a nurturing and familiar environment without the demands of work can be greatly beneficial during detoxification. Keep your evenings free of demanding activities, as you can experience cleansing reactions during the first several days.

It is important to consider the people that we choose to be around and the activities that we participate in during the cleansing process. For example, if you are ready to do a thirty-day cleanse. It may be difficult for you to be around friends and family who are not supportive. It can also be challenging to be with people who are participating in habits that you are abstaining from during your cleanse. It is greatly beneficial to be around people and do activities that motivate and encourage your detox process.

Another important factor to note is that one of the reactions to detoxifying is the re-emergence of old emotional patterns, suppressed emotions will be felt again, in the form of tears, feelings of distress, sadness, even emotional outburst. When this happens, it is essential to remain in a positive mind-frame and attitude to the best of your ability. These emotions always come up as they are being released from the body permanently. Focus on the overall benefits that will come with this

process. So, before starting any detoxification program mentally prepare yourself and your environment.

The Best Time for Detoxification

It is best to cleanse and detoxify whenever you feel stagnated, bloated, constipated, and congested taking over. Elson M. Hass says in his book "The Detox Diet", that,

"Whenever we feel congested, our first step is to follow detoxification procedures fine-tuned to our specific needs. I have found that when I start to feel congested from too much food, people, or activities, I will feel better If I can exercise, sauna or steam, drink loads of fluids, eat lightly, take vitamins C and A, and get a good night's sleep. If I feel my colon requires further cleansing. I take stimulating herbs." Another good time to cleanse and detoxify is when a new season sets in. Elson M. Hass says in the same book, that:

"...Seasonal changes are key times of stress when we need to reduce our outer demands and consumptions and listen to the way our inner world mirrors the natural cycles. Spring is the key time for detoxification; Autumn is also important. I suggest at least a one-to two-week program at these times."

Further on he says,

"An abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables are appropriate for summer; and whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and soups best simplify our diets in winter."

In general, it is good to know that our bodies go through cycles of change just like our outer worlds, the seasons etc. So, it is wise to do a three-to-seven-day cleanse, with the coming of each season. Caution should be taken by people with serious conditions such as heart problems, extreme fatigue, cancer, diabetes, underweight conditions etc. If one detoxifies too much, he/she can become sicker than they are. Consult your physician before fasting or detoxifying.

Elson M. Hass also talks about the concept of "trilogy of nutritional action." In this concept, detoxifying is one part, whereas building and maintaining are the other two aspects. If the individual eats a balanced diet low in fats, meats, dairy products, chemical foods, and processed foods, he/she will need a lighter cleansing process. Whereas someone who eats a diet high in fats, meats, dairy, chemical, and processed foods, will need to use a stronger detoxification process. Lastly, if the body has signs of high toxicity, or congestion, then it is recommended that a strong detox should be taken.

PH Level

Another indicator of our toxicity levels is the PH level of our body, which is affected by the food that we eat and the mental and emotional patterns that we hold. The PH level of the body is the measurement of how acidic or how alkaline the body is. Richard Anderson in his book, "Cleanse & Purify Thyself," states that,

"Following breathing, and the heart beating, the next most important physiological function our bodies perform is the maintaining of a balanced PH."

He further says in the same book,

"PH is the symbol for "potential hydrogen" and is used with a number to indicate levels of acidity or alkalinity. The greater the amount of hydrogen atoms, the stronger the acid, and the lower the PH number. Anything from 0-7, indicates acidity. The more diminished the amount of hydrogen atoms, the more increased the alkalinity and, the higher the number."

Each food has a PH level. The only part of the body that needs to be acidic in the stomach. It is in the stomach that hydrochloric acid, which has an extremely acidic pH of 0.5, which assists in the breaking down of food. The low pH stimulates pepsinogen enzymes that help in the digestion process of proteins. Food is mixed with acid and enzymes in the stomach and then enters the duodenum, which is part of the intestines. An alkaline pH is necessary in the intestines because the intestinal enzymes can only function well in a pH above 7. When people eat large quantities of acidic foods their bodies buffer the acid by assimilating it with the electrolyte organic sodium and bicarbonate. The pH of the body rises when organic sodium is absorbed for the body to be able to safely release the acids. Every time the body uses an electrolyte to buffer acidic food, the electrolyte supply of the body is slightly depleted.

Food naturally contains all the enzymes it needs to break itself down in the body; however, the process of cooking food kills the enzymes, and the body then needs to use enzymes from the body's limited enzyme supply. Each body has a fixed number of enzymes that are catalysts for chemical reactions, including the processes of rejuvenating and healing the cells of the body. If someone eats all acidic food; her/his body will use all its electrolytes for buffering the acids. This person will become electrolyte deficient and her/his health will decline. If this depletion were to continue, it would result in death.

Elson M. Hass and Danielle Chace says in the book, "The Detox Diet", that,

"The acid-alkaline balance is crucial to what scientists call the biological terrain of the body, or the state of the body's tissues and functions. I believe it is this terrain that affects whether or not we are healthy and can fend off most diseases."

According to Richard Anderson, the main difference in how acidic and alkaline foods affect one's body is that acidic foods deplete the electrolyte reserve, whereas alkaline foods build up the reserve. There are benefits to eating both types of food in one's normal diet, for alkaline foods are cleansing, while acidic foods are building. It is the overall pH of the body that should be alkaline for good health.

Acidic foods include all processed foods, baked bread, alcohol, cigarettes, coffee, dairy products, eggs, drugs, legumes, meat, soft drinks, soy, black tea, nuts, and seeds. Alkaline foods include all raw and fresh vegetables, fruits and sprouts, raw juices, and apple cider vinegar. Other than these, emotions and thoughts can also have alkaline or acidic effects on the pH of the body as well. Stress anger,

complaining, and lack of exercise are acidic to the body, whereas appreciation, joy, gratitude, and fun are highly alkaline.

Some tips on making food less acidic and more alkaline are as follows.

- *Soaking mildly acidic foods such as legumes and whole grains can make them more alkaline. Soaking some foods begins the process of sprouting, which is very alkalizing.*
- *Chewing your food thoroughly can also make it more alkaline because the saliva is full of enzymes and thus alkaline.*

It is important to note that a gradual change from acidic to alkaline foods is safest for the body. Furthermore, after a cleansing process, new diet changes can more easily occur, and a balance can more likely be kept. The following are some examples of Alkaline and Acidic Foods

- *Alkaline Foods include raw fruits, vegetables, and sprouts, such as apples, apricots, avocados, bananas, berries, blackberries, broccoli, brussels sprout, alfalfa sprouts, watercress, beets, green peas, barley, kale, etc*
- *Acidic Foods include all cooked grains except quinoa and millet. The following are some examples of acidic food, All processed foods, baked bread, cake, all cereals, seeds, beans, pasta, coffee, alcohol, dairy products, nuts, salt, sugar etc.*

Types of Detoxifications

There are many types of detoxifications available, such as detox of the intestines, blood, liver, kidneys, emotions, and mind. By having a general understanding of these types of cleanses, you will be able to make a more informed decision in choosing the correct cleanse for yourself.

Intestinal Cleanse

Intestinal cleanses are extremely important for the detoxification of the entire body. The intestines are the place where the assimilation of nutrients takes place. Along with that, it is a place for the elimination of toxins. The cells of the body are affected by the accumulated toxins of the intestines, which consists of mucoid plaque and other toxins and congestion of the bowels. By an intestinal cleanse, toxins are released from the systems. Many products are available on the market that can be purchased for an intestinal cleanse. Richard Anderson in his book "Clean & Purify Thyself," describes the powerful effects of his Intestinal Cleanse called The Arise and Shine Cleanse. This cleans is a four-week process and breaks up mucoid plaque and releases it from the body. It purifies the blood, expels all toxic material stuck in the intestines. There are four phases involved in the Arise and Shine Cleanse. Three meals are eaten on phase one, and then one meal is eliminated on each of the following phases. During the fourth phase, only fresh juice is consumed.

This allows the body to spend truly little time digesting and thus more time cleansing. A large focus of this cleanse is releasing mucoid plaque, which often happens during the final phase. Along with that two herbal formulas are used which aid in breaking of the mucoid plaque and releasing it from the body, and providing the body with essential amino acids, vitamins and minerals, chlorophyll, and gives nutritional support to all the organs.

Once the intestines are detoxed, it is beneficial to do a gallbladder and a liver cleanse. These cleanses, remove stones and other toxins from the organs. Anyone who eats cooked food especially a diet high in fiber, meat, and oils is likely to have a clogged liver, and susceptible to having stones in their livers and gallbladders.

When the liver becomes toxic, it is not able to flush all the toxins out of the body. Instead, the liver takes toxins from the bloodstream and stores some of them in the liver itself. This inhibits the liver's ability to detoxify the body. Symptoms of a toxic liver are headaches, bad breath, fatigue, skin irritations, and many more.

A liver cleanse can aid in cleansing the bloodstream, improve digestion strengthen the immune system, clear the skin, improve metabolism, and protect the body from degenerative diseases such as cancer. Also, stones are flushed out. There are many cleanses available these days, most use a combination of olive oil and lemon juice to flush the liver. Olive oil causes the liver to contract, thus pushing stones out through the liver's ducts. Cleanses for the liver are one to 14 days in length and a better option than surgery. Diet changes are highly recommended after cleanses. A diet high in fiber with few or no flesh foods is recommended. Cold-pressed oils, avocados, and seeds are suggested as fats in one's diet, and fasting on juice one day per week is suggested as being helpful for overall health.

Some beneficial Intestinal Cleanses can be found at health store, pharmacies and online. Below you will find a few that can be helpful:

- *https://ca.iherb.com/pr/Nature-s-Secret-Ultimate-Cleanse-2-Part-Total-Body-Program-2-Bottles-120-Tablets-Each/3141*,
- *https://ca.iherb.com/pr/Renew-Life-Cleanse-Smart-2-Bottles-60-Vegetarian-Capsules-Each/7144?rec=iherbtest-pdp-related*,

A Master Cleanse

A Master Cleanse can be used to detoxify the liver, kidneys, digestive systems, glands, cells, joints, and muscles. It furthermore helps to build healthy blood and stimulate healthy tissue growth. Stanley Burroughs in his book, "The Master Cleanse" describes a master cleanse that can be beneficial for detoxifying our whole self. This cleanse can be done for ten days or one to two days once a month to rejuvenate the body. The Master Cleanse is a mixture of fresh lemon or lime juice, maple syrup, cayenne pepper, and water six to twelve times per day. Lemon helps to detoxify the body, while maple syrup gives the body energy from an unrefined source of sugar. The body gets a break from heavy digestion, as the liquid

mixture is easy for the body to assimilate. It is also recommended to take an herbal laxative along with a master cleanse mixture to increase the effects of the cleanse.

A general and simple cleanse can be done by a 3-day Apple cider vinegar detox. The website Why you should try the 3 Days Apple Cider Vinegar Detox (Steps Included) (menwithkids.com) gives a great way to detox in a short period of time. The following is the detox from the same website:

1. Expels Toxins from the Body

Raw apple cider vinegar contains good bacteria that are essential for proper functioning of the gut. It contains unique acids that help to bind and carry toxins for easier elimination from our bodies. Additionally, Apple cider vinegar aids in breaking down mucus in the body and cleansing the lymph nodes, which in turn expels toxins more effectively.

2. Jump Starts the Digestive System

Probiotics are microorganisms that help our bodies to function properly. One of their biggest benefits is in the digestive system. Apple cider vinegar boasts 5 different probiotics that do wonders to your gut. Due to its acidic nature, it boosts the production of digestive juices which results in a more efficient system eliminating issues such as constipation.

3. Improves Metabolism Contributing to Weight Loss

Taking apple cider vinegar regularly helps with weight loss by improving your metabolism. It does this by increasing muscle contractions in the intestines and therefore speeding up food ingestion. It is also known to increase satiety feeling as it stabilizes blood sugar, enabling you to eat less. Combined with exercise it can be a powerful weight loss tool.

4. Balances the Body's pH System

A good balance of acidity and alkalinity in the body is essential for maintaining good health. While vinegar is acidic by nature, when apple cider vinegar is broken down in the body it produces an alkalizing effect. Most bacteria and viruses cannot survive in an alkaline environment, and thus promotes good health. If you work out regularly, a balanced pH environment helps reduce muscle pain and speeds up their regeneration.

5. Boosts the Immune System

Nobody likes to be sick. The apple cider vinegar detox has numerous benefits, and one of them is keeping you healthy. It contains vitamins, minerals and enzymes that are important for good health. When you detox your body is able to absorb nutrients such as vitamin c better, strengthening the immune system. Moreover, it helps to clean the lymphatic system, and a well-functioning lymphatic system is essential for warding off disease-causing microorganisms.

What Goes into an Apple Cider Vinegar Detox?

The main ingredient of the detox is 1-2 spoons of raw apple cider vinegar, usually diluted with water or fruit juice. The most popular recipe contains 1-2 spoons of apple cider vinegar, 1 spoon of lemon juice, 1 cup water and ½ tsp. cinnamon powder

Other variations may switch the lemon juice for cranberry juice, green tea or apple juice. You might want to add some cayenne pepper or honey. As these combinations are endless, it is prudent to try a few recipes to see what works best for you.

Steps to a 3 Day Apple Cider Vinegar Detox

Studies vary on the best time/number of times to take the detox drink in a day. There are no hard and fast rules, but consensus seems to lean on taking it before meals. You can choose to take it once or twice a day, before breakfast and dinner. A good way to maximize the benefits of the drink is to stick to healthy meals.

Day 1

Start by drinking a glass of warm water first thing in the morning. Prepare your best recipe for the apple cider vinegar detox and take it before breakfast. After a while take a light healthy breakfast, such as whole grain cereal or fruit. For lunch and dinner, stick to fresh vegetables and lean proteins such as grilled chicken or fish, or a vegetarian dish. Drink lots of water throughout the day and help the body to expel toxins by breaking a sweat- a brisk walk or a run should do it.

Day 2

The detox process is now in motion. Take the detox drink as usual in the morning before you eat anything and have a breakfast of fresh fruits. Remember to drink lots of water. Take a salad for lunch and a light dinner of vegetables and steamed chicken or fish or any vegetarian dish.

Day 3

You are almost there! After your morning detox drink stick to fruits and water on this last day. Take a vegetable dinner. Most probably you are already seeing and feeling the difference in your body.

Eating healthy is a very important in the detox process detox! You can take some superfoods or superfood green juices to enhance the energy levels of your body.

Emotional and Mental Cleansing

Our diets affect our emotional, mental, and spiritual states, and to cleanse these, we need to focus on what we are eating. The connection between one's diet and mind has been understood by cultures for thousands of years. Herodotus, a

Greek historian noted that meat-eating cultures were more focused on war than vegetarian cultures. Gabriel Cousen states in his book "Conscious Eating," that,

"Consciously or unconsciously, people tend to choose the diet that reinforces and reflects their own mental and spiritual states of awareness."

One can use food as medicine for the mind, emotions, and spirit. Cousens suggest increasing fruits and vegetables, and grains to feel more relaxed, light, calm, spiritual, intuitive, and intelligent. Furthermore, if you feel dull, irritable, heavy, tense, it is wise to decrease the amount of dairy and fresh foods to help in feeling better.

Gabriel Cousen in his book, "Spiritual Nutrition and the Rainbow Diet," says that, "Diet influences the state of mind, and the state of mind influences the diet choice." To create a balanced state of mind, one should eat sprouts of legumes and grains, raw greens and grasses, fresh fruits and vegetables, and soaked nuts and seeds. One should strive to eat 70% alkaline foods and 30% acidic food to attain a balanced state of mind.

Another method of emotional cleansing involves focusing on the chakras, or energy centers, of the physical body. This can be done on oneself or by another person. The website, www.freehealing.com, The Ministry of Universal Energy Healers states that energy becomes trapped in the body when one experiences emotions such as anger, fear, resentment, jealousy etc. If such energy remains trapped in the body, a person will not be able to heal completely from illnesses.

A vital part of energy healing is a person's intention and willingness to be healed. The Ministry of Universal Energy Healers says, "You may not know how to forgive, but if you are willing to forgive, it is already a great step towards gaining health."

The power of thought is often underestimated by people but can have a profound effect on emotional and mental cleaning. One can create thoughts and positive affirmations to affect the body in a harmonious and healing way. According to Michael Van Straten in "Super Detox," that positive affirmations can become rooted in the subconscious, where they can then push out any negative emotions stored there.

According to the website www.spiritualpath.org, Blanca Greenberg explains how cleansing is a very necessary part of people's spiritual awakenings; "Emotional Cleansing opens up the sacred space in our hearts to make room for spiritual emotions: love, harmony, peace, tranquility, unity, abundance, happiness, joy, spiritual ecstasy, and oneness with the ultimate source."

Another way to detox the mental and emotional states is by making changes in one's diet. Dietary changes are more effective after a cleanse. Eat foods that are less congesting such as fruits and vegetables, greens, and herbs. Avoid foods such as refined sugars, dairy products, eggs, fried foods, meats, hydrogenated fats, and refined flour.

Another great way to create lifelong dietary changes is by including raw foods in your diet. Raw foods are mainly alkaline and can assist in the detoxification process. Raw foods include fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, roots, sea vegetables, and sprouted grains. Raw foods will cleanse and release all the toxins in their bodies. This type of cleanse and diet makes one feel rejuvenated, connected with nature, and feel young again. You are what you eat. Raw foods are as nature created them, and they contain life-force and enzymes. Richard Anderson says in his book, "Cleanse & Purify Thyself, "that, life force is a key ingredient to health. He further says that life force is,

"The source of energy and nerve power. It gives life to our cells and the enzymes in our body." The life force of each of our bodies decreases when we eat cooked food, take drugs, or experience negative thought patterns. Cooking food kills its enzymes because enzymes die at a temperature above 119 degrees Fahrenheit. Enzymes are essential to the body for utilizing proteins, vitamins, and minerals, digesting food properly, and for all metabolic processes to take place.

The Essene Gospel of Peace quotes Jesus saying that,

"So, eat always from the table of God: The fruits of the trees, the grain and grasses of the field, the milk of beasts, and the honey of bees. For everything beyond these is of Satan and leads the way of sins and diseases unto death. But the foods which you eat from the abundant table of God give strength and youth to your body, and you will never see dis-ease."

Different Types of Fasts

Fasting is also a way to detox the mind, body, and spirit. People have been practicing fasting for thousands of years. In ancient times philosophers and religious figures used fasting to help themselves to open to a divine connection and to understand the truth of the cosmos.

Many religions use fasting for purification, spiritual awakenings, and initiation. The Muslims fast every year, for thirty days, during the month of Ramadan from food and water. The fast starts before dawn and goes till sunset. It is done to purify the body and mind and to create a divine connection through prayers. The Christian period of Lent is a time during which people give up certain foods to connect to God and Jesus. Yom Kippur is the Jewish day of purification, during which people fast from food and water. Buddhists Monks, Tibetan Monks, and Hindu's practice fasting before holy days.

Fasting has been defined in many ways. Fasting means to abstain from food and water, or certain types of food and water, or from certain types of food such as meat.

Gabriel Cousens in his book "Spiritual Nutrition and The Rainbow Diet," says that,

“Fasting in a larger context means to abstain from that which is toxic to the mind, body, and soul.”

Many people take fasting as a period of purification, a break from the everyday routines, and stresses to rejuvenate themselves. It also reduces one’s appetite and opens one up to personal development. As we abstain from food, our body begins to look for other ways to nourish itself, such as prana, chi (life-force) energy. One’s level of prana energy can lead to create better health and well-being.

Gabriel Cousen says in his book “Spiritual Nutrition and The Rainbow Diet,” that fasting,

“Is not done to make the body suffer, because in practical reality the body is also becoming healthier with fasting. It is done because, until we achieve a certain level a spiritual communion, the desires of the body-mind complex are often stronger than the desires of God Communion.”

There are many types of fasting and fasts, and Gabriel Cousens recommends a gradual process of initiating one’s body into fasting. Cousens gives four stages of fasting in his book “Spiritual Nutrition and The Rainbow Diet”. The First level of fasting is for people who eat a meat diet. These people are recommended to fast from meat for one week twice a year. The second level is for people who do not eat meat. They should fast on fruits and juices for three days once per month or one day per week and additionally fast for seven days twice a year. The third level is for people on a lactovegetarian diet; they are recommended to fast on juices (or the same schedule as level two). These three levels of fasting are designed to purify the body at the physiological level and as support for spiritual practices. The fourth level of fasting is different than the others, it is an active spiritual practice within itself, done in conjunction with prayer and meditation. This level consists of four, ten-day fasts per year and either fasting three days a month or one day per week. This level is for people who are on a vegetarian diet and desire to use fasting to enhance their spirituality. Fasts at the final level can start out consisting of fruit and vegetable juices, then progress to wheatgrass and finally to distilled water.

Another method of gradually getting into the habit of fasting is described by Nischala Joy Devi in her book,” The Healing Path of Yoga,” she says instead of jumping into long fasts gradually move into it. On the first day, Nischala suggests too fast for a few hours. This can be done by eating a normal breakfast, skipping lunch, and instead practicing yoga or breathing exercises. One can drink herbal teas, vegetable juice, or vegetable broth to appease hunger. For dinner eating in moderation and with appreciation is best.

The Second Phase of fasting is for people who have had a positive experience with the first stage. During the second stage, one can eat a regular breakfast and lunch, but then fast from after lunch until breakfast the next morning, following the same guidelines as the first phase. This is about an eighteen hour fast, and a great deal of the time is spent in sleep.

The third step is to fast for twenty-four hours by fasting from lunch one day until lunch the next day. Nischala says the third phase of fasting, "is sufficient for a regular once-a-week or once-a-month healing fast. Longer ones can be added as the practice feels more comfortable."

So, we see that there are several ways to fasting. Before beginning a fast, it is essential to consider, which type of fast is beneficial for you, and the best time to do the fast. The following are some simple fasts.

- *A water fast can be done by anyone. Drinking five to seven glasses of water per day, slowly.*
- *A juice fast can consist of the same amount of five to seven glasses of juices from fresh fruits with no added sugar. Drink it slowly to savor the taste.*
- *Herbal Tea fast is another simple fast. One can take five to seven glasses of herbal tea (Choose one type of tea, such as green tea, lemon ginger, fruit tea, etc.) and drink it slowly.*

The Simple fasts should be done with no food, only liquids for three days from sunrise to sunset. Eat a light dinner of vegetables, and perform light exercises, meditations, or prayers with breathing exercises. During the fasting period, the individual can experience different symptoms as our toxic bodies are awakened to eliminate. Some of these symptoms can come in the form of headaches, bad breath, nausea, and feeling weak.

In addition, there is a spiritual fast that has been practiced by mystics, Sufi Master, Gnostics called the forty-day spiritual fast. Jesus and Moses both fasted for forty days with no food or water. There is also a progressive forty-day fast that is beneficial to some. In this fast, if someone is a meat-eater, for example, they could eat 37 days of vegetarian foods and then 3 days of juices. The purpose of this fast is not to cleanse but rather to commune with the Divine. Gabriel Cousens in his book," Spiritual Nutrition and The Rainbow Diet," says that,

"It is on this (forty day) fast that we directly confront death and the offering up of our body, mind, and ego to God."

Gabriel Cousens describes his experience of the forty-day fasting, that had left him highly energized and clear-minded. He meditated for nine hours per day. He says in the same book, "My mind became so devoid of thoughts that in meditation, it would simply dissolve into the light of God for hours at a time."

The physiology of fasting shows the benefits it can have on the physical body. When the body does not get its nutrients through eating foods, it begins a process called autolysis. During this process, the body turns to poorly functioning cells and breaks them down to be metabolized. Autolysis usually begins after three days of fasting.

Gabriel Cousens in his book "Spiritual Nutrition and the Rainbow Diet," says that one should stop fasting when the body is done breaking down the unhealthy cells, which is indicated by a renewal of appetite. If one were to continue fasting at that

point, the body would turn to its healthy cells and begin to break them down. The organs of the body that help to release toxins, which are the liver, kidneys, bowels, lungs, and skin can become more active during a fast. One's body no longer must use its energy to digest food and can instead focus on cleansing itself.

While fasting it is helpful to do deep breathing exercises, taking saunas, aromatherapy, relaxation music. One can also take enemas to clear toxins from one's bowel. Gabriel Cousens also recommends taking flower essences, such as a combination of flower essences: self-heal, silver sword, papaya, lotus, star sapphire, and quartz. Self-heal helps the body absorb prana or universal energy. Silversword balances one's heart chakra and aids with the subtle bodies. Papaya essence helps to balance sexual and emotional energies, while lotus works on alignment of all levels of a person. Finally, star sapphire focuses on activating the chakras.

It is essential to drink lots of water, which helps in eliminating the toxins. Taking extra electrolyte minerals will help buffer the toxins, making them ready to be removed from the body. After completing the fast period, it is important to transition between fasting and eating one's regular diet. A person's digestive system will shut down during a liquid or dry fast for several days or more, and when food is reintroduced to the body, the digestive system will absorb nutrients very quickly. Cousens suggests breaking a fast with foods that the individual wishes to use for rebuilding one's body, such as healthy, healing foods. The completion of a fast can be an excellent time to change one's diet or lifestyle.

Cleansing Reactions

It is greatly beneficial to know cleansing reactions that can occur while on a cleanse or fast. These do not always occur but can be looked at as a possibility to help you decide whether to cleanse lightly, or heavily detoxify, or not cleanse at all. Some symptoms are as follows.

- *Headaches*
- *Dizziness*
- *Nausea*
- *Low energy*
- *Weakness*
- *Sneezing*
- *Coughing*
- *Skin eruptions*
- *Rashes*
- *Fevers*
- *Sweating*
- *Re-experiencing past symptoms of illnesses*

The symptoms come forth when toxins are released and begin to flow through the bloodstream. If people are not aware of this cycle of healing, they might stop the cleanse because they believe it is harming them and their bodies.

While fasting and detoxification, one might feel a healing crisis-that is feeling sick, Bruce Fife in his book "The Healing Crisis", explains that one might experience a healing crisis while detoxifying. The sick feelings might range from mild to extreme. Since the body is healing itself from overeating and toxicity, it will experience re-emergence of previous emotional and mental distresses attached to certain illnesses. Re-experiencing feelings of previous illnesses or emotional distresses during a cleanse or fast are symptoms of a healing crisis; such feelings re-emerge while they are being released from the body for good. A healing crisis marks the end of a cycle of disease. Richard Anderson states in his book, "Cleanse & Purify Thyself," states that,

"The beginning of a dis-ease marks the beginning of a cycle in which a dis-ease inhabits and impairs the body to varying degrees, even after the acute phase of the illness has passed; the healing crisis is the ending of that cycle, freeing the body entirely from all influences of that dis-ease through both your internal healing process as well as with the lifestyle and nutritional guidelines...You will begin to serve your body and life toward its highest potential."

A healing crisis will pass in three days, leaving a person feeling better than before. Bruce Fife in his book, "The Healing Crisis", says that experiencing a healing crisis can be a time of gratefulness and celebration. Fife states, "We should rejoice, knowing that we have eliminated more causes of disease. It means that we have cleansed and purified our bodies from unwanted toxic waste which was poisoning the body, mind, and feelings."

In the Detox Diet, Elson M. Hass further explains another cleansing reaction. He says that there can often be two voices within an individual. One voice may urge the person to smoke a pack of cigarettes because life is short and so why not empty it? Another voice, however, may be saying that it wants to be healthy and free from addictions. An approach that Hass recommends is to take a small break from one's addictions. This can mean a day, a week, or longer depending on how the individual feels. These breaks from toxic substances will give the body time to detoxify renew itself and rest. Caring for one's well-being can be important to always focus on, important to focus on all times, including during times of detoxification because of the possibility of experiencing cleansing reactions.

Conclusion

A healthy physical body becomes disease-free and positively affects one mind, emotions, and spirit. Cleansing and fasting offer a time for our bodies to detoxify the buildup of food, chemical substances, and residues, along with blocked emotions that would otherwise unconsciously affect our day-to-day well-being, there are numerous cleanses available on the market today. Do your research and find the one that suits your needs the most. Also keep your environment, where you live free of toxins and clutter. Keep your homes clean as a clean home is a healthy home.

Detoxifying your body and the environment you live in, may or may not be right for you, but by being receptive to the information in this course you have hopefully gained a deeper understanding of cleansing and fasting that will support both you and your clients.

To gain knowledge is to take a powerful step in embracing the ways of living and taking responsibility for yourself and your choices. May this continue to open doors for you and those around you into, newer, more beautiful, and ever-fulfilling lives.

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Metaphysical Healing I
Segment 1-Herbs & Its Uses by Dr. Saiyra N Akbar

"In spite of human perversion, wars, and corruption, there have always been secret outposts teaching the divine nature of humanity and the full range of extended human potential. Over the centuries, there have been great teachers who came to rekindle the ancient wisdom. These included Lao-Tze, Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Mohammad, and Jesus of Nazareth. In their wake have sprung up many world religions, each teaching the same basic principles in a slightly different tongue and version, but all speaking the same truth. What has been lost over the years is the symbolic nature of the lessons they came to teach. Their metaphorical words have been literalized, often to the extent that the basic spiritual meanings have been altered or lost." Richard Gerber, Vibrational Medicine: New Choices for Healing Ourselves

Herbalism has been in practice for ages and has evolved as humanity has evolved. Herbs are plants, whose leaves, roots, seeds, and flowers are used as medicine, food, flavoring, and perfume. They have also been used in rituals and ceremonies, politics, as massage oils, aromatherapy, and even in superstitions. Herbs have also been used for physical and spiritual health benefits and that is the purpose of herbalism. We use herbs daily without realizing it. For example, the tea, coffee we take every morning comes from herbs. These are stimulants that are proven scientifically to be decongestants. They are effective in aiding and soothing a sore throat. Coffee is said to aid in weight loss, and reduce cellulite, it increases stamina and awakens the senses. Tea, on the other hand, aids in digestion and is rich in fluoride which is good for the well-being of your teeth. C. Norman Shealy says in his book, "The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Healing Remedies"' That, "Since before recorded history humans have used plants for food, medicines, shelter, clothing, dyes, weapons, musical instruments and transportation. The cultural development of different countries and the rise and fall of empires have often been linked to the understanding and exploitation of plants. Herbalism, the use of plants for medicinal purposes, has been common to all peoples of the world. Our understanding of herbalism has been passed down from generation to generation." By learning and using herbs we connect to the earth's energy. We often forget that nature and earth is a vital part of our life, and each and every part of nature contains a wisdom we must acknowledge and learn from. Sometimes it is wise to let go of our worries, fears, and fast-paced lives and indulge our senses with the spirit of earth and nature. The wisdom of the earth can teach us to find better health and joy in our lives. It is our right as a human beings to live a healthy life, and herbs teach us the wisdom of being healthy and living in balance.

The study of Herbs is reconnecting to the earth's energy which is found in plants, fruits, trees, flowers, etc. The plant kingdom reveals to us the spirit and wisdom of the earth and its fruits. This is the beginning of the reconnection back to the oneness of God. The earth vibrates at a certain energetic frequency and when we become connected to that same frequency, we become connected to the oneness of all. All religions and cultures talk of the heights of spiritual reality which

is found in the Oneness of God. Therefore, by taking the initiative to learn about herbs, and all that the earth brings forth to us, we begin to reconnect to the earth, and thus to the universe, and our true spiritual reality.

Herbs are healing and their energy brings balance back to our bodies. They contain the pure energies of the earth and nature, such as air, water, sun, and earth(soil). These energies interact with our spirits, our thoughts, and feelings, initiating the healing process on the holistic and energetic levels. Herbs are plants that heal. Lesley Bremness in "Herbs" states that, "Herbs are plants that connect us to the past, present, and future. We associate them with appetizing foods, natural scents, gentle healing, peaceful gardens, beneficial crafts, intriguing history, and sacred activities."

The plant kingdoms hold different types of herbs, such as ferns, algae, conifers, mosses, trees, shrubs, perennials, etc. There are many types of herbs in nature. The more we explore the more we discover. Michael Castleman explains in, "The New Healing Herbs," that, "The word herb comes from the Latin word for 'grass.' Technically, herbs are plants that wither each Autumn, plants other than shrubs or trees. But many woody perennials are used in herbal healing, such as slippery elm, tea tree, and white willow. To an herbalist, the phrase, "healing herbs," applies to every planet with medicinal value." Let's explore the history of herbs, to understand their value and importance.

History of Herbalism

Herbs have been in use since the beginning of mankind's existence. In antiquity, herbs were used for flavoring meats and preservation purposes. They were also used as medicine to treat illnesses and ailments. Whereas some used herbs saturated in oils, for perfumes and massaging oils. Herbs were also burned in rituals and ceremonies to create a beautiful smell and to clear negative energy. Such as the burning of sage leaves. All ancient civilizations used herbs in their everyday life. Michael Castleman, says in his book," The New Healing Herbs," that, " Prehistoric sites in Iraq show that the Neanderthals used yarrow, marshmallow, and other herbs some 60,000 years ago." He further explains how angelica and licorice were used by the Native Americans, Asians, and Europeans for treating respiratory ailments. Hop and mint were great stomach soothers in all ancient traditions. Uva Ursi had diuretic properties to treat water retention and bloating. White willow was used to treat inflammation and pain. Further, the Ancient Greeks used sweet marjoram as a valuable tonic and parsley as a cure for stomach ailments. Rosemary was eaten in the Middle Ages for its tranquilizing effects and as a cure-all for headaches. Chives, still a common herb often found growing wild, had economic importance throughout Asia and many Mediterranean countries. Many traditions and cultures, planted chives in the fields so that the cows would give chive flavored milk.

Furthermore, other non-human primates are also known to ingest medicinal plants to treat ailments and illnesses. Archaeologists have gathered plant samples

from prehistoric burial sites which support the claim that Paleolithic people knew herbal medicine

Egyptian Herbalism

The ancient Egyptians also had medical texts with the uses of different herbs and plants, and how to use them to treat illnesses and ailments. One such medical text found in Egypt was called The Ebers Papyrus. It states the many benefits of herbs for example one of the benefits of the marijuana plant can be used to treat inflammation. This text has a list of treatments for ailments. And consists of over 85 different plants with their medicinal uses. The remedies worked to treat the symptoms. C. Norman Shealy in "The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Healing Remedies", describes the use of herbs found in ancient cultures, "The Ebers Papyrus of the ancient Egyptians lists 85 herbs, some of which, like mint, are used similarly today."

Chinese Herbalism

The use of herbalism in the Chinese tradition date back to the Ice Age. The Chinese herbal document, Pen Tsao Ching, contains over a thousand herbal remedies. The Pen Tsao Ching called the "Classics of Herbs" was written by Emperor Shen Nung. This text contains 237 herbs and plants with their various benefits and uses. Michael Castleman describes in " The New Healing Herbs," that, " Legend has it that around 3400 B.C. (the time of the iceman), "the divine farmer," mythical emperor-sage Shen-Nung, invented agriculture and discovered that many plants have medicinal value. He tested herbs on himself and recorded their effects, then died after consuming too much of one that turned out to be poisonous. Chinese herbalist credit Shen Nung as the author of China's first great herbal, the Pen Tsao Ching (The Classic of Herbs), which listed 237 herbal prescriptions using dozens of herbs, including ephedra, rhubarb, and opium poppy." Castleman explains that the Pen Tsao Ching was a text that collected insights of generations of Chinese herbalists. Some other herbal remedies included were, hemp and chaulmoogra which were used as a remedy for leprosy, Ephedra for colds, bronchitis, and metabolism. Another common remedy was ginger tea, which was good for indigestion.

The Taoists philosophy of healing included the use of different herbs in their food and medicines. Lesley Bremness explains in her book, "Herbs," that, "Underlying Chinese herbalism is the Taoist philosophy, in which all phenomena result from the interplay of yin (feminine, cool, moist) and yang (masculine, hot, dry) as they create a spiral of continuous change. So early Taoist tasted each herb to feel its yin or yang effects and linked each with a season, taste, emotion, and element (fire, water, wood, earth, or metal) to symbolize its way of creating change in the body. Taoists sensed three types of body energy: Jing-inherited, instinct, and growth, nurtured by food and herbs; Qi (Chi)-the life-force in all things, adjusted through acupuncture and herbs; and Shen, which gives higher consciousness by meditation. All three energies are considered in the Chinese Holistic Approach to diagnosis. A herb is seldom used alone as a treatment, but is combined with others to reinforce its action and to counter side effects."

Assyrian and Babylonian Herbalism

The Assyrian and Babylonian scribes wrote herbal recipes on cuneiform tablets. The ancient Babylonians and Sumerians are also said to have used plants and herbs for health and wellness. They also used herbs and essential oils to treat illnesses. In Mesopotamia, the written study of herb dates back over 5,000 years to the Sumerians, who created Clay Tablets with lists of hundreds of medicinal plants (such as myrrh and opium).

Greek Herbalism

Each new experience brings about new knowledge. Hippocrates, the Greek physician and the Father of Western Medicine, used herbs to treat all illnesses and brought a new paradigm shift in the healing of that time. He viewed illnesses as inevitable to being human, that it was a part of life and that the treatment of these illnesses lay in the fact that the earth and nature held the medicine to heal these diseases. He emphasized on eating right and exercise along with herbal medicines to stay healthy. Another Greek physician by the name of Dioscorides authored a treatise on over 500 herbs and plants with their uses. Paul Twitchell in his book, "Herbs: The Magic Healer," talks about the Philosopher Aristotle, who wrote a secret book called the, "Golden Cabinet of Secrets." Twitchell says that this book , "…was composed of many formulas, recipes, and prescriptions regarding certain herbs and plants that he and his contemporaries had studied. He found many plants to be poisonous and narcotic in nature, so his works were kept secret…. Aristotle discovered that herbs were astringent and had the property of contracting tissue. He also found the antispasmodics, which helped prevent spasms and relieve muscular irritability. He found demulcents, which soothed the membranes of the nose and throat, helping coughs and colds. The philosopher wrote voluminously about tonics, sedatives, aromatics, laxatives, and purgatives. Many famous people of history used the recipes which Aristotle put together, including Alexander the Great and Cleopatra."

Ayurveda (India & Pakistan) Herbalism

Ayurveda was another form of Holistic Healing that has been practiced in the Hindu healing system and some Pakistani traditions. Lesley Bremness explains how Ayurveda is the science of living, in her book, "Herbs." She describes the ancient Hindus used this system of healing to heal themselves from diseases. Ayurveda included "…meditation, yoga, and about 500 herbs. Ayurveda sees three forces interacting with the body systems; Agni (fire), prana (breath), and soma (love). Ayurvedics believe that imbalance causes illness, so they use herbs to rebalance the whole system as well as to treat specific symptoms." Ayurvedic remedies consist of many native Indian herbs to be used in their remedies. Michael Castleman in "The New Healing Herbs, "explains, how Ayurvedic Medicine inspired the Arabs, who used them along with other Greek therapies. "The Arab physicians in turn introduced some Ayurvedic practices into Europe. During the 19th century, the British introduced Western Medicine into India, but a majority of Indians and Pakistanis still rely on Ayurvedic medicine or homeopathy, both of which emphasize medicinal herbs instead of drugs."

Arab Herbalism

With the fall of the Roman Empire, many other cultures came to fill the void, of which one was the Arab Civilization. Many of their books and knowledge was absorbed within the Arab civilization and used to enhance their life. Avicenna (Arab Ibn Sina was one of the Philosophers, and healer who studies the Greco-Roman herbal texts. Michael Castleman says in "The New Healing Herbs," that, "Ibn Sina, or Avicenna (A.D. 980-1037), was the leading Arab Physician. While still young, he cured an Arab prince of a serious illness. Afterward, his services were in great demand. A follower of Galen, he wrote the Canon of Medicine, the west's medical bible for 600 years. Book two discusses the healing herbs, including nutmeg, senna, sandalwood, rhubarb, myrrh, cinnamon, clove, and rosewater." The 9th century Arabs in Baghdad were the ones to create the first pharmacy where all types of herbal medicines, tinctures, and herbal tonics were sold.

European Herbalism

Another Civilization that filled the void that came from the fall of the Romans, were the Europeans, dominated by the Catholic Church. They believed that disease came about as a punishment for the sins they committed. Disease could only be eradicated by penance and prayers. On the other hand, there was a group of Monks, especially the Benedictines who studied herbalism and believed that the Arab way of healing with herbs would heal the individual of its afflictions. They created herb gardens and promoted the use of herbs in food and medicine. Michael Castleman says in "The New Healing Herbs," that, "Around A.D. 820, the Benedictines designed their ideal monastery, known as the Plan of St. Gall. In one corner was a medical area that included an infirmary, baths, doctor's room, and bloodletting room. It also featured a 1000 square-foot physic garden that contained two dozen herbs, among them cumin, fennel, fenugreek, mint, rosemary, pennyroyal, rose, rue, sage, savory, and watercress."

In other European traditions, the spice routes became a great fascination for many. The famous Italian explorer, Marco Polo's memoirs were filled with interesting information about his travels to the orient, where he became friends with Kublai Kahn, who introduced him to the world of herbs and spices. In 1300 A.D. Castleman explains how the British businessmen and spice dealers obtained a Royal Charter to become the Guild of Pepperers. He says that, "They bought back black pepper and other herbs from brokers in Venice, who traded with Arab importers. By 1400 Venice alone imported 2,500 tons of ginger and black pepper a year. European demand seemed insatiable." Other explorers became enamored with herbs and spices and brought them back home. One such explorer was Christopher Columbus.

In addition, the Spanish Explorers brought back different herbs and spices from Mexico, such as lima beans, strawberries, passionflower, sarsaparilla and cinchona. Cinchona was considered essential to the Mexicans as it was a remedy for malaria. The Europeans used this herb to treat Malaria, also known as ague. In Modern times, cinchona was used to extract the prescription drug quinine, which was used as an antimalaria treatment. "In New healing Herbs," Michael Castleman

explains that "The Spanish may also have returned from the New World with something else: Syphilis. A doctor in Seville claimed that he had treated Colombus's crew in 1493. It's possible that they became infected in Haiti. Or perhaps increased trade, spread a disease that had existed for ages in isolated pockets around the Mediterranean. In any event, an epidemic of unusually virulent syphilis swept through Europe in 1494, killing thousands. Europeans considered the disease an import from the New World and looked across the Atlantic for a cure. They focused on sarsaparilla, which was widely used until well into the 19th Century. The herb turned out to be ineffective against the disease. Another syphilis treatment was mercury. It played a key role in the schism that developed in the early 19th Century between pro-mercury "regular" physicians and anti-mercury herbal "Eclectics.""

Another prominent, English Herbalist was Nicholas Culpeper, who was famous for giving out free herbal and medical knowledge to the public. He frequently treated the poor for free, which outraged the medical professionals. Culpeper wrote a book on herbalism called the "Complete Herbal and English Physician." His other works included "The Epistles," in which he accused the physicians for charging the public for free information. He believed that herbal medical knowledge should be given freely to those who need it. His expression for freedom, and his belief that people deserve to live disease-free brought about a major shift in the medical paradigm.

Native American Herbalism

Elsewhere the Native Americans Tribes used herbs and plants in their everyday life. They used them in rituals, ceremonies, for decorating and creating artistic endeavors. They were the first to discover the healing benefits of Echinacea, which boosts the immune system and prevents and treats colds. The Native Americans also used herbs for tanning and dyeing leather. The Native Americans learned about the benefits of herbs by observing animals and going on vision quests and through dreams. Paul Twitchell states in his book "Herbs: The Magic Healers", that, "Every animal has as inborn instinct, and when sick, will seek out certain grasses, weeds, or plants to eat." The Shaman or Medicine man guides the sick individual on the healing journey. They use different combinations of healing herbs, with their sacred knowledge of the medicine wheel, totem healing, and dream journeys to heal the sick individual on a holistic level.

Native American herbal healing knowledge comes mainly from trial and error. Lesley Bremness says in her book, "Herbs," that," Turning to herbs for healing is an instinct as old as human history. And is mirrored in the behavior of animals. As humans evolved, so too did a variety of beliefs in what maintained life and the events or forces that could damage it. Many healing remedies that involved plants were selected by observation, inspiration, and experience, and skilled healers became highly valued member of the tribe of all races." Native American tribes practiced healing with herbs and considered them sacred to their culture as it connected them to the spirit of the earth and thus the universe. In his book, "The New Healing Herbs," Michael Castleman describes the belief of the Native Americans," Each tribe had its medical mythology, but the Cherokee tale is typical.

Long ago, humanity grew too numerous. Hunter's killed so much game that the animals feared their survival. The bears, deers, birds, and other creatures decided to unleash diseases to reduce hunting. But the plants decided that the animals had acted unfairly. The trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers showed humanity how they could cure the diseases that the animals had unleashed." This goes to show how the cycle of life and healing is connected in the Native American tradition.

Castleman goes on to talk about a European French explorer by the name of Jacques Cartier, who discovered the St. Lawrence River in Canada and a disease. "In 1536, he sailed to the present-day Quebec, where he and his crew dug in for the winter. Within a few months, 25 of his 100 men had died of "Sailors Disease" (scurvy), and most of the rest were gravely ill." Scurvy was considered a dangerous disease from which many sailors died due to not having a proper treatment or remedy. However, Jacques Cartier was given a herbal remedy from an Indian. The remedy was a tea made from yellow cedar bark and leaves. After drinking the herbal tea, the sailors were healed and recovered to full health. Research has shown that the remedy contained vitamin C, which prevents and cures scurvy. Castleman further says that the Indians gave valuable herbals to the Europeans. Some of the herbs given included witch hazel, slippery elm, echinacea, black haw, black cohosh, boneset goldenseal, sarsaparilla.

Herbal Traditions Around the World

Another place that bears witness to the uses of herbs since the early history of man is the Lascaux Cave paintings in France. These cave paintings reveal images of various herbs being used for food and medicine. C. Norman Shealy explains in "The Encyclopedia of Healing Remedies," how in the west, the Saxons had nine sacred herbs that they used for their rituals and healing diseases. Shealy says, "The Saxons wrote the 'Leech Book of Bald,' which was a mixture of remedies and rituals. There nine sacred herbs included yarrow, marigold and hawthorn. A modern practitioner of herbal medicine would rate them equally highly." In other places, the Romans are said to have used herbs in their everyday life, for medicinal and spiritual purposes. For example, the romans used dill to purify the air. Shealy also describes how the golden age of herbalism was initiated by the development of the press. He explains in the same book, that, "Culpeper printed the London Dispensary (1653) in English (it had been previously been printed in Latin), and later published his 'Complete Herbal,' a book, he boasted from which any man (woman) could find out how to cure themselves for less than three pennies! Culpeper's herbal was immensely popular and is still available, having gone through over 40 reprints."

All cultures and races of the world held the belief that the life-force of the earth existed in herbs, thus giving herbs the power to heal. Herbalism is based on healing the imbalanced energy of the physical body. By giving the body what it lacked, through proper herbal nutrition, the body was brought back into balance-thus healing could take place.

Herbs in Modern Times

"Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul." John Muir(www.quotegarden.com/nature.html)

Modern Herbalism has evolved from the ancient culture of Sumer, Crete, Egypt, and Greece. Lesley Bremness in 'Herbs," describes how the knowledge of herbalism has evolved through the ages to become a part of the Western Herbal Systems. "In Greece, in 1300 B.C. Asklepios developed healing centers combining his diagnostic skills and unrivaled knowledge of herbs with music and sports. Asklepians became a noble order of healers and include Hippocrates, who emphasized self-healing. About AD 175, Galen codified Greek ideas of the four elements: earth, water, fire, and air, relating them to four humors and personality types. These formed the basis of European herbalism and Pakistani Unani medicine. The Roman "mechanistic" view took over from ancient Greek "holistic" ideas and dominated science until recently."

Modern medicine is based on traditional and natural concepts. Chemistry has revealed the various components and elements that make up a plant and used this knowledge to create a new type of medicine, called "drugs". In modern times, researchers of medicine recognized the most important element of the herbs and used them to make effective prescription drugs. Most of the medicine available these days is derived from herbs and other chemicals to enhance and increase the healing properties. C. Norman Shealy says in 'The Encyclopedia of Healing Remedies", that "Botanical medicine was regarded as fringe medicine for many years. It was valued as a starting place for modern research, but, thought to have nothing to offer Western Society as a therapy in itself. Pharmaceutical companies identified the active therapeutic principles of many plants, synthesized commercial analogs, and patented new drugs. But in doing so they often missed the major principles of using natural sources for therapeutic purposes. Herbalism, when practiced properly, is marked by a completely different attitude from orthodox medicine." Herbs can be used as a complementary to treating illnesses and diseases. They can help in chronic conditions and everyday minor to acute ailments. Herbs, like most alternative healing medicines, offer a holistic approach to healing- that is to heal the whole person, which includes the mental, emotional and physical body of the individual. Shealy further says in the same book, "Herbalism is a holistic system that uses plants, or plant parts, in a nonintrusive way." Herbalists believe that the different parts of a plant work synergistically to stimulate the natural healing process by strengthening the body and its various systems.

Michael Castleman describes how the modern world has used herbs without realizing their true nature. "The New Healing Herbs," describes how Coca Cola was initially an attempt to develop a herbal headache remedy. "Coke was invented in the 1880s by an Atlanta pharmacist who stocked the tropical kola nut because 19th-century physicians prescribed it to treat respiratory ailments. An article in the Journal of American Medical Association suggested giving cola drinks to children with asthma because they prefer them to standard asthma medication."

The prescription drugs we use are derived from herbs. The word drug links us to herbal healing, it comes from the German word droge, which means the act of drying-that is drying of herbs. The initial step in making prescription drugs is the drying of herbs and making them into prescription medicine. An example of this is found in Aspirin. Michael Castleman says in "The New Healing Herbs," that, "Aspirin was originally, created from two healing herbs, while willow bark and meadowsweet's old genus name, spirea, gave us the '-spirin' in "aspirin." For the congestion of colds, flu, or hay fever, millions of Americans (Canadians) reach for Sudafed. Its active ingredient, pseudoephedrine, was developed from the world's oldest healing herb, Chinese Ephedra (Ma Huang), which Chinese physicians have prescribed for 5000 years to treat chest congestion." Castleman goes on to describe how Listerine contains thyme, whose active ingredient thymol is an ingredient in Listerine, which helps prevent tooth decay and gum disease.

Using Herbs and The Doctrine of Signatures

When using herbs to heal, a herbalist would look to the affected area and choose the herb that matched the body part in question. For example, herbs used for the heart would be shaped like a heart. A herb shaped like a kidney would be the herb to treat all kidney diseases. Matthew Wood says in his book, "The Book of Herbal Wisdom", "Scrophularia roots look like swollen glands, hence it was used for swollen glands and hemorrhoids. The orange-yellow sap of Chelidonium indicates that it is for bile." Herbs were sampled and tested by many herbalists, But one herbalist went one step further and used the knowledge to formulate, 'The Doctrine of Signatures.' He was an Italian Mathematician and Herbalist by the name of Giambatista Della Porta). Michael Castleman says in "The New Healing Herbs," that, "...The Doctrine of Signatures claimed that a plant's physical appearance revealed its healing value. As British herbalist William Coles explains in his "Art of Sampling (1656)," God had not only "Stamped upon plants...a distinct form but also given them particular signatures whereby a man may read the use of them. According to Coles, "Wall-nuts {walnuts} have the perfect signature of Head. The outer husk represents the Pericranium or outward skin of the skull, whereon the hair growth, and therefore those husks are exceedingly good for wounds in the head. The inner woody shell hath the signature of the skull...and the kernel hath the very figure of the Brain. If the kernel be bruised, moistened with wine, and laid upon the head, it comforts the head and brain mightly." Some herbals still suggest walnuts for headaches."

Another great supporter of The Doctrine of Signatures was Paracelsus. He replaced the Humoral Theory of illness with the Doctrine of Signatures. Castleman further explains how this theory became the new paradigm of medicine. Paracelsus found that any plant that had hollow leaves and stems was a respiratory remedy. Castleman describes an example of the doctrine, "Bile has a yellowish tinge, and jaundice, a liver problem, turns the skin yellow. Under the doctrine, any yellow flower or root was considered a liver medicine."

Herbs are treatments that are based on the symptoms. By treating the symptoms, we treat the disease. Several herbs can be used for treating a symptom. Herbs are used to treat the physical and spiritual bodies of the individual on a holistic level- The Whole Individual. Herbs are considered transformational to the psyche and thus the physical body. They have been used to bring about changes in the diseased individual's soul/spirit and thus heal the physical body. You will have to research each herb properly to see which is best to use for your diagnosis. For example, for heart, you can use Foxglove, Hawthorn Berries, Garlic, or Cayenne.

Paul Twitchell explains in his book, "Herbs: The Magic Healer," that each herb works differently for the individual using it. "...what is good for one individual in herb healing may not be especially so with another; everyone cannot use the same herbs for the same results. Everyone is different in his/her consciousness and in his (her) body metabolism. Therefore, he/she must accept the fact that whatever one person can use and benefit from may not be best for himself/herself. Generally speaking, one formula for an herb mixture produces a remedy for numerous people; but in the long run, there is no sure single prescription for everyone. If a person needs a diagnosis or a prescription for a specific health problem, he should see his own physician, who can handle his case according to the laws of medicine." One can also research the different remedies and the one you feel most attracted to try that. For example, for Heart ailments, It is important to note that Cardiovascular complications can be very serious and life-threatening, but they can also be prevented. This can be done by changing the way one eats, through exercise and prevention. Herbal medicine can complement these approaches to strengthen the heart. Some herbs that can be used to complement heart treatments are as follows:

Hawthorn (Crataegus spp.): *Hawthorn has a very long and safe history of use and is specific to the cardiovascular system. It can help to support virtually all facets of normal cardiovascular function, from muscle tone and oxygenation, to circulation and rhythm. Hawthorn capsules and tinctures that contain all plant parts can be used to compliment heart treatments.*

Cayenne (Capsicum annum): *Cayenne is a major stimulant for the circulatory system. It can increase circulation and strengthen the heartbeat. Large doses of cayenne can be irritating to the stomach, so start with small amounts or take it with food.*

Rose (Rosa spp.): *Rose supports a healthy heart on both the physical and energetic levels. The fruit (rose hips) are antioxidant-rich, contain high amounts of vitamin C and help to strengthen the capillaries. The petals are quintessential energetic heart medicine — uplifting, soothing, and connecting us to feelings of love. Both can be found as supplements, and rose petals can be found as rose water or rose essential oil.*

Reishi (Gandoerma lucidum): *Reishi is good for the heart. It is a potent antioxidant that can help to normalize cardiac function and support healthy cholesterol levels. On an energetic level, reishi helps to open and expand the energy of the heart, encouraging us to live from a place of love and compassion,*

and at the same time releasing blocked energy. Reishi can be used as teas, tonics or smoothies, or try in capsule form.

As with all herbs and supplements, be sure to consult your health care practitioner before any self-diagnosis and use.

Doing the research will help you decide which herb resonates with your condition and your whole self. Lesley Bremness says in "Herbs," that, "Herbs offer hope for cures for modern diseases. Alkaloids that inhibit HIV have been discovered in Australia's Moreton Bay Chestnut, Amazon Alexa trees, and Hogweed. Diseases such as Malaria, which are now resistant to some synthetic drugs, have been found to respond to treatment with traditional herb cures. The number of herbs believed to combat cancer grows daily-Suma (Pfaffia Paniculata), the so-called "Amazon Ginseng," is now a patented cancer treatment-and more people are using tonics like the Chinese Sweet Tea Vine (Gynostemma Pentaphyllum) to boost energy levels and strengthen the immune system." So adding herbs to our daily life is beneficial for our whole being.

Herbal Treatments

There are many different ways to use herbs of which some are as follows:

1. Infusions: are herbal teas made from dried leaves, flowers, stems. Sweeten with honey or stevia.

2. Decoction: Similar to infusion, but are made from the rough parts of the plant such as nuts, roots, bark, and seeds.

3. Compress: A cloth dipped into an infusion of the herbs to treat swollen parts, joints, pains, and aches. Both hot or cold compresses can be used.

4. Tincture: Soak the leaves, root, or flowers in alcohol to make a tincture.

5. Poultices: Use hot water with herbs or dried herbs and make into a paste and put on infected areas, boils, spots, wounds, and painful joints.

6. Herbal Washes/Baths/Mouthwash: Use hot water with herbal oils or dried herbs to make washed, or baths.

7. Creams and ointments: Herbs are soaked in creams.

You can obtain herbs from herbal stores, online, herbal garden centers, or wholefood and organic health stores. Or you can grow them yourself. Herbs are plants and all parts of the plant can be used for treatment. The following are the different parts of the plant used in herbalism: leaves, roots, flowers, seeds, fruits, bark, buds, inner sap, bulbs, wood, resin, fixed oil, seaweed, mushrooms, and essential oils.

Healing with herbs can be categorized into two parts. The first is using herbs to heal yourself. This would be using herbalism as a self-help method. Herbs are taken without the advice of a professional herbalist. C. Norman Shealy describes some basic rules for self-help treatments, which are as follows:

- *Consider the holistic approach to healing with herbs. That is first ask yourself if you need this herb or do you just need to make some lifestyle changes, such as more relaxation, dietary changes, more exercise, etc.*
- *Use simple herbal remedies to encourage the natural healing process.*
- *Keep a record of all remedies you use.*
- *Take the recommended dosage.*
- *Monitor your progress*
- *Stop treatment if there are adverse side effects.*
- *Seek professional help if you are not sure of assessing your symptoms.*

The second method of taking herbs involves going to a Professional Herbalist. They will diagnose and recommend the herbal remedy for you. The following is a list of some common herbs:

List of Herbs

1. Achillea Millefolium (Yarrow) Benefits: Good for fevers, hay fever and dust allergies, catarrh, thrombosis (to prevent blood from clotting), aids in intestinal infections, diarrhea, colic and weak digestion, pelvic conditions and circulation. Regulates menstrual bleeding if irregular, cramps and vaginal discharges. Yarrow can be used to treat varicose veins and spontaneous bruising. As a tea or cream can be used to disinfect wounds and stop bleeding. As a compress for bleeding piles. In combination with hawthorn and linden can aid in lowering high blood pressure. In Combination with sage & marigold for pelvic infections and pelvic congestion with menstrual cramps. Yarrow is a great anti-inflammatory & antiseptic herb.

2. Acorus Gramineus (Acorus): Benefits: Good to ease stomach problems, & pain, a great antioxidant, can be used as a tranquilizer has a calming effect. Protects the brain from free radicals, aids in detoxing drugs from the body.

3. Agrimonia Eupatoria (Agrimony) Benefits: Good for liver and digestive systems, treat heartburn and indigestion when used as a tea. Aids in food allergies and stooping diarrhea can be use for sore and inflamed eyes, and cleansing wounds. In combination with St. John's Wort and horsetail can be used to treat cystitis and bedwetting.

4. Alchemilla Vulgaris (Lady's Mantle) Benefits: Good for treating womanly problems such as infertility, menstrual pain, PMS, diarrhea in children. Strengthens the womb.

5. Allium Sativum (Garlic) Benefits: Lowers blood pressure, aids in high cholesterol, chest infections, asthma, colds, flu, and ear infections. Removes intestinal worms and fungal infections. Used to treat thrombosis, hardening of the arteries. It has antibiotic, antiseptic, and expectorant properties.

6. Aloe Vera Benefits: Good for burns, sunburns, acne, cuts, infection wounds, wrinkles, and dry skin. Can also use as a mouth wash for sore gums.

7. Althea Officinalis (Marshmallow) Benefits: Good for heartburn, acidity, ulcers, hiatus hernia and irritable bowel, irritable bladder, aids in dry coughs. Dying the leaves and making a powder and mixing it with water will create an ointment that can be used for insect bites and eczema.

8. Angelica Archangelica (Angelic Root) Benefits: Good for digestion system, indigestion, colic, coughs, poor circulation, tonic to rejuvenate lethargy, aids in eliminating persistent fevers. Chinese Angelica known as Dang Gui or Angelica Sinensis is called ginseng for women and can be used for menstrual pains, anemia and to rejuvenate the reproductive system.

9. Arctium lappa (Burdock)Benefits: Good for eczema and other skin conditions such as acne, spots, boils, rashes, psoriasis, rheumatism, and gout. Also, it's a great blood cleanser, Lymphatic cleanser, and Diuretic. In combination with dandelion root, it is good for skin and liver issues.

10. Arctostaphylos Uva-Ursi (Uva Ursi Leaves) Benefits: Good for urinary tract, urinary antiseptic, diuretic and astringent, good for cystitis. In combination with nettle and horsetail can be used to treat an irritable bladder. In combination with Lady's mantle can be used for vaginal discharges.

11. Astragalus Membranaceus (Astragalus) Benefits: Good for chronic fatigue, to strengthen the immune system, infections, allergies night sweats, glandular fever, and stomach ulcers. Also aids in a lack of appetite and tiredness.

12. Calendula Officinalis (Marigold Flowers) Benefits: Good for digestion, colic, stomach ulcers, children's infections & fevers can be used as a gargle for sore throats and tonsils. As a wash/cream/ointment/compress good for itchy rashes, grazes, cuts, eczema, and fungal infections, sore nipples, sore eyes, spots, inflamed wounds, painful varicose veins. Assists in lifting the spirits and healing, has anti-inflammatory, antiseptic properties.

13. Avena Futua (Wild Oats) Benefits: Good for nervous system, nervous exhaustion, restores the nerves, exhaustion after childbirth, restores reproductive organs, addresses loss of libido in both sexes, PMS, menstruation. A good anti-depressant.

14. Capsella Bursapastorius (Shepherd's Purse)Benefits: Good for stopping internal bleeding & external bleeding, bleeding of the stomach, the lungs, kidney & urinary tract, and nose bleeding.

15. Capsicum Minimum (Cayenne) Benefits: Good for poor circulation, inefficient digestion in the elderly, chills. Externally for cramps and muscle spasms, aches and pains, cold and stiff joints, post shingles, neuralgia.

16. Codonopsis Pilosula (Codonopsis) Benefits: Good tonic to strengthen and rejuvenate the immune system, for exhaustion, weakness, excessive sweating, acidity, chronic coughs, and chronic diarrhea, asthma, and shortness of breath.

17. Chamomilla Recutita (Chamomile) Benefits: Good for calming the body, anxiety, tension, headaches, and insomnia. Aids in digestive upset, acidity,

heartburn, wind, and colic. Aids in calming restless and overexcited children and for most children's complaints, including fevers and teething. As a cream or both can be used to treat itchy skin.

18. Crataegus Oxycantha (Hawthorn Berries) Benefits: Good heart healer, strengthens, the heart, relaxes the arteries and lowers the blood pressure, aids in irregular heartbeats, angina. In combination with valerian and linden good anxiety and palpitations.

19. Dioscorea Villosa (Wild Yams)Benefits: Good for bladder pains, menopausal symptoms, vaginal dryness, aids in rheumatoid arthritis, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, hiccups, colic.

20. Echinacea Purpurea (Echinacea Root) Benefits: Good for removing infections, viruses, bacteria, strengthens & rejuvenates the immune system against colds and infections. Aids in boils, acne, herpes, and tiredness. As a mouthwash for mouth ulcers and gum infections, sore throats, and tonsils.

21. Equisetum Arvense (Horsetail) Benefits: Good for arthritis, irritable bladder, blood in urine, strengthens nails and hair(due to high content of silica & zinc). Speeds healing after surgery. Strengthens the bladder. In combination with St. John's Wort good for bladder control.

22. Filipendula Ulmaria (Meadowsweet)Benefits: Good acid stomach, heartburn, ulcers, rheumatism & arthritis, clears sandy deposits in the urine. Calms digestive systems. In combination with peppermint or chamomile for indigestion.

23. Foeniculum Vulgare (fennel) Benefits: Good for colic, stomach upset, wind and irritable bowel, anxiety, depression, and disturbed spirits, for arthritis and water retention or edema. Promotes milk flow in nursing mothers, antidepressant.

24. Fucus Vesiculosis (Bladderwrack) Benefits: Good for obesity, cellulite, chronic dry skin, and stubborn constipation. Using this herb often and regularly will delay arthritis and hardening of the arteries. A good tonic for old age. Also helps with slow mental & physical development in children (also called Kelp).

25. Ginkgo Biloba Benefits: Good for poor circulation, varicose veins, cramps in legs from walking, deafness & senile dementia. Strengthens memory and failing circulation to the brain in older people, senses asthma.

26. Harpagophytum Procumbens (Devil's Claw) Benefits: Good for decreasing inflammation in the joints, arthritis, inflamed joints & arthritis affecting several joints. For gout, lumbago, sciatica, rheumatism. Also aids in gall bladder inflammation.

27. Hamamelis Virginiana (Witch Hazel) Benefits: Good as cream/ointments/compression and wash, for sore, tired eyes, sunburns, hot swollen joints, sprains, broken capillaries, varicose veins, bruises, and cuts. Also oily skin

28. Hypericum Perforatum (St. John's Wort) Benefits: Good for rejuvenating the nervous system, and depression, anxiety, neuralgia, sciatica, and back pain

from deep wounds. Cream/Tincture for shingles, cold sores, and herpes, sore skin, inflamed rashes. In combination with lavender essential oils for treating neuralgia base oil/infused oil for back pain.

29. Leonurus Cariaca (Motherwort) Benefits: Good for calming the heart and relaxes the womb. Aids palpitations & irregular heartbeat overactive thyroid. Can use in the last week of pregnancy to help with the birth. In combination with skullcap or valerian for tranquilizer withdrawal. In combination with vervain for anxiety from stress and burnout. In Combination with sage for menopausal hot flushes.

30. Lycium Barbarum (Lycium Fruit) Benefits: Good for impotence and premature ejaculations, restores strength and general weakness with vertigo, and recurrent headaches, eyesight, backaches, and general aches and pains.

31. Mentha Piperita (Peppermint Leaves) Benefits: Good for digestive system, indigestion, colic, gall bladder pain, and itchy skin. In combination with elderflower and yarrow for sinus and colds.

32. Panax Ginseng & Eleutherococcus Senticosus (Ginseng and Siberian Ginseng Root) Benefits: Good for immune system, rejuvenate, exhaustion, fatigue from old age, increases focus and energy. Aids in loss of sex drive in men, jet lag, aids in side-effects of chemotherapy.

33. Pollen Benefits: Good for prostate glands and stimulates the production of testosterone, treats arthritis, rheumatoid, gallbladder, aids in coping with radiation therapy, beneficial in disorders of the liver, intestines and stomach, pollen also is good for hay fever and allergies and cancer.

34. Prunella Vulgaris (Prunella) Benefits: Good for healing of bruises, bleeding scars, and wounds, decreases lymphatic congestion, aids in healing inflammation swollen glands, throat, irritated eyes, and mouth. Also treats herpes and Aids/HIV.

35. Rheum Officinale (Rhubarb Root) Benefits: Good for stomach acidity, gastroenteritis, and diarrhea from food poisoning, gout, cancer, and for constipation, liver and gall bladder disorders.

36. Rosemarinus Officinalis (Rosemary leaves) Benefits: Good for poor circulation, depression, digestion, gallstones, gall bladder disorders, stimulates hair growth, eczema, sore muscles, rheumatic disorders, headaches, and baldness. Also aids in treating cancer.

37. Salix Alba(white willow bark) Benefits: Good for arthritis, inflamed joints, gout, joint pains, sexual overstimulation, wet dreams, and premature ejaculations. In combination with cramp bark for back pain inflammation and lumbago.

38. Salvia Officinalis (sage leaves) Benefits: Good for nervous exhaustion and depression, weak lungs with coughs, menopause hot flushes, menstrual cramps. As mouthwash for sore throats, laryngitis, mouth ulcers, tonsillitis, inflamed and sore gums. Weakness, stress, and confusion in elderly people, indigestion.

39. Sambucus Nigra (Elderflowers) Benefits: Good for colds, sinusitis, flu, hay fever, fever, brings sweating. As anointments for dry chapped hands and discolored skin.

40. Schisandra Chinesis (Schisandra Berrier) Benefits: Good for nervous system and exhaustion, insomnia, burn out, loss of sex drive in men and women, asthma and coughs, restores softness to the skin.

41. Serenoa Repens (Saw Palmetto) Benefits: Good for muscle building and prostrate problems, cystitis, assists in weight gain, prostate cancer, HIV/AIDS, and menopause. Stimulates sex hormones. In combination with damiana for impotence in men.

42. Sculellaria Laterifolia (Skullcap) Benefits: Good for treating epilepsy, and nervous systems.

43. Silybum Marianum (Milk Thistle Seed) Benefits: Good for liver and gallbladder, gallstones, food allergies, high blood pressure.

44. Symphytum Offinale (Comfrey) Benefits: Beneficial in healing of broken bones, cuts, wounds, sprains, dry skin.

45. Tabebuia Avellandae (Pau D'Arco) Benefits: Good for immune system and deficiency and intestinal infections.

46. Tanacetum Parthenium (Feverfew) Benefits: Good for arthritis and migraines.

47. Taraxacum Officinalis (Dandelion Leaf) Benefits: Good for water retention, edema & swollen ankles associated with circulation problems. Powerful diuretic. Treats anemia, jaundice, blood purifiers. (Dandelion Root)Benefits: Good for liver and gall bladder disorders, arthritis, skin diseases, blood cholesterol, gallstones, obesity, indigestion, constipation.

48. Tremella Fucifermis (Snow Fungus): Beauty enhancer, anti-aging properties, immune system is improved, fights infections, increase fluids in the body.

49. Turnera Diffusa (Damiana) Benefits: Good for urinary tract infections, blood circulation, metabolism, treats impotence, regulate sex hormones in women, stimulates nerves & reproductive health.

50. Ulmus Fulva (Slippery Elm Bark) Benefits: Good for digestion, ulcers, heartburn, indigestion, acidity. Has a calming & Soothing effect on any part that it touches.

51. Urtica Dioica (Nettle) Benefits: Good for iron deficiencies, lethargy, heavy feeling and weakness, arthritis, can be used as an antihistamine, for allergies. As a lotion can be used for insect bites, eczema.

52. Valeriana Officinalis (Valerian Root) Benefits: Good for insomnia, nervous system, anxiety, confusion, migraines, depression, flying, palpitations, high blood pressure.

53. Verbena Officinalis (Vervain) Benefits: Good for exhaustion, burnout, nervousness, fevers, nervous system disorders, good for letting go, indigestion, headaches, asthma, chest tension.

54. Viburnum Opulus (Cramp Bark) Benefits: Good for back pain, muscle spasm, shoulder and neck tension, can be used as a sedative and relaxant.

55. Vitex Agnus-Castus(Agnus Castus Berries) Benefits: Good for PMS, Menopausal symptoms hot flushes, mood swings, Balances hormones, increase sex drives.

56. Zingiber Officinale (Ginger) Benefits: Good for nausea, pregnancy nausea, travel sickness, circulation, chills, cold.

Some Beneficial Herbs

- *Acai Berry: Good antioxidant, detoxifies the body of toxins, anti-aging benefits, stronger heart, reduced cholesterol, improves poor circulation, increases energy, good for weight loss, and better concentration and focus.*
- *Garcinia Fruit: Burns fat, suppresses appetite.*
- *Hibiscus: Fights Obesity*
- *Cinnamon: Treat Diabetes,*
- *White Kidney Bean: Lowers sugar Levels*
- *Green Tea: Antioxidant, increases energy, digestion*
- *Chrysanthemum: Regulates blood pressure*
- *Golden seal: Contains anti-fungal properties, good for yeast infections, candidiasis*
- *Goldenrod: A native American herb used for bladder, gallbladder, and kidney problems. Treats kidney stones and gallstones, yeast and urinary tract infections.*
- *Corn silk: Treats in kidney stones*
- *Ephedra: For colds, sinus, weight loss, induces sweating, hay fever, influenza, emphysema, asthma,*
- *Birch (Betula): Anti-inflammant, diuretic, antispasmodic, treats arthritis and muscular pain, kidney stones, PMS, bladder infection, cellulite, cancer, and warts.*
- *Opium (Papaver Somniferum): To put one into deep unconscious sleep. Given before minor surgeries, or when in pain etc.*
- *Rosehips: To help correct nutritional deficiency, spongy bleeding gums, pale bloated look.*
- *Lavender: Used to ease digestion, calms the nerves, cures insomnia, peaceful dreaming, stops spasms, treats anxiety, bronchitis, yeast infections.*

- *Peppermint: General stimulant. Its tea circulates quickly, digestive aid, and treats colds, coughs, and fever.*

Combination Herbs

- *Heart Healers: Foxglove, hawthorn, Lily of the Valley Root, Horsetail are cardiac herbs.*
- *Relaxation Tonic: Chamomile, hops, tansy, verbena with a strong pinch of peppermint for a soothing tonic.*
- *Headaches: Horehound, willow bark tea, fennel- needs to be brewed and given for extreme headache pain or hangovers.*

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Introduction to Sound Healing
By Saiyra Akbar

"Healing sounds is a great gift for humankind." – Kitaro

Sound Healing is a potent tool that can transform disease into healing the physical body. This Vibration energy medicine has been used for centuries. The ancient mystics, shamans, seers, Sages and healers were all adept at this healing method. They used sounds such as chants, mantras, bells, Tibetan singing bowls, drumming, sacred words, and incantations to heal all ailments and restore health.

What is sound? Sound has been around for centuries and is considered to be one of the first creative force in existence. The Oxford Dictionary Thesaurus and

Word Power Guide (large print) define sound as, “Vibrations in the air detectable by the ear, a thing that can be heard”. Sound is basically vibrations that operate at various different frequencies. When a word Is uttered sound is created. Joseph S. Dillon states in his book, Unified Field: Modern Theoretical Physics Meet Ancient Metaphysics, that,

"The term, WORD means the Sound current, the Audible Life Stream, or the Essence of The Absolute Supreme Being, that is the dynamic force of creative energy that was sent out as sound vibration..."

So sound is everywhere, in everything that is around us and is sent forth at all time, as everything Is being created at all times. Since sound is the source of everything, it can surely create healing.

How exactly does sound healing work. The vibrations of sound affect the consciousness
of matter. The atoms are affected by the sound vibration and are forced to raise their own vibrations to the level being vibrated or the sound being heard. Thus, by raising the vibrations of the atoms, they are moved to a higher level. If done frequently, they form a habit. More precisely, it takes forty days to make a habit or break one. Doing something consistently for 40 days will make it a habit. So, if listening to a certain vibration frequency for forty days a new habit will start to form, releasing the old vibrations and its habits, causing atoms to re-arrange themselves in a new form to match its new higher vibration.

One’s own belief and intention of the healing process. An intention to heal needs to be created before beginning any healing process. Lynn McTaggart, in her book The Field, states that, "The use of conscious thoughts (including prayer) sends vibrations into the COBWEB of energy, and exchange to facilitate change in the material world as we experience it."

I have been listening to healing sounds for seven years now and have found them to be very beneficial. My life has changed dramatically since I started listening to healing music. I started out by listening to Buddha Bar music which is composed of the eastern and western elements and holds the power to move you on the soul level. Listening to this music helped release pent up emotions I didn't know existed in me. The music really touched the depth of my soul releasing blocked energies in the form of emotional outbursts and tears. Now I realize that it was blocked energy being released from my psyche and soul.

History of Sound Healing

The history of sound healing dates back to the time when humans began living on the earth. All ancient cultures practiced sound healing in one form or another. Wayne Perry in his book, "Sound Medicine: The Complete Guide to Healing With The Human Voice", says, "

“ Throughout the ages, spiritual sages and masters have referred to this sacred

sound as the Word, Logos, Om, Kalma, Shabd, Nam, Nada, Celestial Melody, Inner Voice and other names. This Infinite tone resonates within each one of us-sustaining life and offering true soul freedom and transcendence."

Ancient medical papyrus documents were found in Egypt, revealing that that the ancient Egyptians had Incantations and words of power as cures for just about anything. Even the Greeks used sounds from instruments such as flutes to give relief to pain from ailments such as gout. Olivia Dewherst-Maddock describes the ancient healing methods of many cultures. Her book, "The Book Of Sound Therapy", says that,

"Egyptian medical papyri from 2,600 years ago refer to incantations as cures for infertility, rheumatic pain and insect bites. In about 324 B.C, the music of the lyre restored Alexander the Great to sanity. The Old Testament records that David played his harp and lifted King Saul's depression. The Essenes and therapeutai used sacred words for healing. And in Hellenistic cultures, flute-playing eased the pain of sciatica and gout. The knowledge of sounds, rhythms and chants was an essential ingredient in the healing powers of the shaman..."

As we move through the history of various religions and traditions, we find many cultures practicing sound healing. Pythagoras taught the art of sound healing and believed that everything was in a state of vibration and that this vibration could be perceived and understood as a wave of audible sound, which we today know as sound frequencies. Tibetan Monks used Sounds from Tibetan singing bowls, and their own voice in the form of chanting to ease or heal various different diseases. This chanting coupled with sound from instruments, known as Tibetan chanting, is a very powerful way to transform disease into healing. This sacred sound combines two or more notes creating a very powerful sound. The sound produced of these multiple tones is called harmonics. This sound or harmonics has a very deep frequency that facilitates the transformation of disease into healing. An example of this can be found in listening to Tibetan Monks chanting the "One Voice Chord". The One Voice Chord is a two three tones being made at the same tone, to create a powerful, yet deep sound.

Jonathan Goldman states in his article, taken from the website www.shiftyourlife.com, "Sacred Sounds-Healing Sounds",

"Dr, Alfred Tomatis, a french doctor, has spent many years researching the sacred sounds of the world. In particular, he has examined much sacred chanting, including Gregorian and Tibetan. Dr. Tomatis has found that many of the sacred sounds on the planet are rich in high frequency sounds, called harmonics and overtones. He believes that these sounds change the cortex of the brain and stimulate health and wellness."

The same principle can be applied to Sufi Chanters and mystics, who use sacred sounds from sacred words to create transformational changes in one's own being- healing the physical and spiritual bodies. Kirpal Singh in "Naam or Word, Book two Shabd-The Sound Principle", states that, "Hazrat Inayat Khan, a modern Sufi mystic, tells us that this creation is nothing but the "Music of God", for it is the

outcome or manifestation of his power..."

Further on in the same article Inayat Khan reveals, "...All space is filled with Saute Sarmad or the "Abstract Sound"". The article goes on to describe how those individuals who can hear this sacred sound, "Saute Sarmad" are made free from stress, anxiety, worries and diseases of the body. Saute Sarmad is the Sufi version of the sacred sound current that penetrates all space.

As we move from culture to culture, the sounds coming from drumming works to the same effect by creating high frequency sounds. Shamans, the Aboriginals of Australia, and African mystics are able to experience trance-like states that enable them to facilitate healing of the physical and spiritual. Drumming has been used for centuries by the Indigenous people for healing purposes. In the book, "Panoramas: History and Citizenship Education," by Christophe Horhuelin It is described how the shamans used drumming for healing purposes.

“Since illnesses were also attributed to the activity of evil spirits, the shaman was called upon by everyone to be by the bedside of the sick. The shaman used ritual such as dances and songs to the rhythm of a drum, whose goal it was to chase away the evil spirits that caused illness."

Sound is believed to be a universal language that we can all relate to on some level. Since the source of everything is sound, its vibration and frequencies, then healing can be achieved by going to this source. The general idea of sound healing is to break through the cycle of disease and create a harmonious state of being once again.

How Sound Effects the Physical Body

What is illness? The scientist Itzhak Bentov, in his book "Stalking The Wild Pendulum" states
that, "Illness is an out of tune behavior of the body. When something becomes diseased its frequency changes and it begins to vibrate differently than it once did. Through sound, it may be possible to apply harmonizing vibrations which will cause the body to become "in tune" again."

Everything in the universe is vibration energy. Matter from which a physical form is created, is very dense energy, whereas sound and light is very high energy vibration. Since everything in creation starts with sound, everything is sound vibrations operating at different frequencies. This points to the fact that everything is energy, so by fixing the frequencies of the energy we can bring about healing of the physical body.

Illness is the state of being out of balance of the normal vibrations that the physical body operates on. So it makes sense that by correcting and influencing

these frequencies through sound, we can bring about healing. Disease starts, when there is an imbalance in our emotional, mental, spiritual or physical energies. To discover the root cause of any illness, it is essential to check our beliefs, decisions that are creating our reality. It is also important to monitor our inner dialogue and see what it's focusing on. Sometimes we keep thinking of the same thing, this is blocked energy creating imbalance, which later results in disease. When this pattern is noticed, It's time to face that issue that is bothering you, make peace with it and allow yourself to move on. Some diseases or health problems may be ingrained deep within your psyche from past experiences, which have not been resolved. Some may stem from fears, resentments harbored for an extended periods of time. This effects your psychological make up, which then effects your physical being and the way you perceive your reality. The emotional baggage of the past needs to be resolved and let go. If not resolved it will cause emotional disturbances which can and usually, and does lead to physical diseases.

Sound healing can help resolve such problems by forcing one to re-think and re-evaluate events and situations, bring about a new perspective into view. That is utilizing sounds creates deep, higher vibrations to facilitate change to an old mindset or habit. Thus, breaking the cycle or habit to create harmony once again. Sri Swami Sivananda in his book "Thought Power", says that, "Mind is the subtle form of the physical body. The physical body is the outward manifestation of the thoughts. Therefore, when the mind is wrought, the body is wrought too."

Further he says,

"...The body follows the mind."

He goes on to explain how depressing, fearful, guilt ridden thoughts bring about a state of imbalance, disharmony, which can lead to serious illnesses in the physical body. Sri Swami Sivananda also says in the same book, "Thought exerts influence over the body. Grief in the mind weakens the body."

Whatever you think, you will unknowingly attract to yourself. Meaning that what corresponds to your way of thinking and what you think of most you become. The human body is known to vibrate at different levels, just like a musical scale. This can be seen by the seven energy centers, the chakras. Each energy center operates at a different frequency with a matching color and sound. Each chakra also relates to a specific musical note from the musical scale. Adjusting the vibration through sound healing, forces the energy through the body causing a shift in the blocked areas. Any illnesses, viruses or infections hiding in the body are forced to surface.

An article, "Care of the Body", by Samuel L. Lewis, a Sufi mystic, states on the website, http://murshidsam.org/Documents/Papers/Level1/Care_of_the_body.pdf, that, "These centers become blocked by certain foods and by living a more materialistic life...". He further describes what the body needs in order to achieve optimum health, " In the language of the mystics it is called "Nur" which means light. The body does not only want food, but also breath- in other words, vibration- and that vibration is given to it by the repetition of sacred words; the sound; the vowels, and the composition of the sacred words..."

The heart of sound healing works on the fact that everything is in motion - everything is vibrating. Sound is a vibrational energy which takes the form of waves. Going down to the basics of all creation the building block of all matter, of all creation, is the atom, and even further the subatomic particle. The smallest particles in existence are explained by Quantum Physics. Within the atom electrons are always in motion and vibrating at a certain frequency. One of their characteristics is that they can be transferred to other atoms, thus re-arranging themselves. This is how healing occurs, when these atoms are able to restructure themselves. We can cause change to occur at the sub-atomic and atomic levels.

Simone Gabbay quotes Edgar Cayce reading 1967-1 in his book, "Edgar Cayces', Energy Medicine: Healing With Light, Sound, Aromatherapy, Homeopathy And Other Vibrational Therapies",

" Know that all strength, all healing of every nature is the changing of the vibrations from within-the attuning of the divine within the living tissue of a body to creative energies."

The vibration, frequencies of sound, effects the consciousness of matter. It is able, to transform the arrangement of atoms and sub-atomic particles through sound vibrations. The atoms and sub-atomic particles, are thus re-arranged to form a new structure. On the human level, physical healing occurs when the sound vibrates the atoms, sub-atomic particles and molecules of matter in the physical body. What is actually happening is a movement, breakdown and then re-arrangement of the structure of the atoms, sub-atomic particles, and molecules, to match that of the sound being played. If you keep repeating this pattern the frequency of sound starts dissolving the old structure, blocked emotions are released, energy barriers are broken, freeing energy, and creating space for spirit to move in and start the healing process.

New cells and structures are reproduced and once again harmony of the bodily organs with the other system is achieved. According to the website, www.soundhealingcenter.com, research has shown that hemoglobin completely lights up when exposed to a particular sound frequency. Another clinical study reveals that specific frequencies actually create more bone density, regenerating the bones. This shows the effects of sound are extremely powerful. Sound is a potent tool in breaking up disruptive patterns and habits. That is how sound is able to allow healing to take place.

Research done with tuning forks has revealed that the different frequencies of sound have caused blood cells to transform their structure and color. In the book, "The Book of Sound Therapy", by Olivia Dewherst-Maddock describes a research done on Cancerous cells. By exposing the diseased cells to a sequence of rising frequencies, resulted in disintegrating and disrupting the cancer cells. Olivia says in the same book that, "The frequencies of the notes maybe sufficiently close to the cells' own natural frequencies to set up sympathetic vibrations, reinforcing resonances, and breaking up disruptive interference patterns."

The mystics of the past have been telling humanity this truth for ages which we are discovering for ourselves as the science of vibrations is being studied and revealing itself in new ways.

Intention A Crucial Element

"A thought-form is a living entity, and it has a strong tendency to carry out the intention on the thinker." Sri Swami Sivananda

Another factor that is crucial for sound healing to work is the force of intention. Creating an Intention to heal is the first step for any healing to occur. Before taking any medicine, it is Important that we create an intention to take that medicine with the belief that it will heal us. One's own belief and intention in the healing process is the key to starting and maintaining the healing process. Belief creates a directed thought that follows that path no matter what, even if the belief is false, the conscious directed thought will create a pathway to its completion.

Prentice Mulford says in his book "Thoughts are Things", that,

"...If the thought of health, strength, and recuperation is constantly held to in the mind, such thought of health, strength, and rejuvenation will express itself in the body..."

Sound is like a current, it is able to carry the thought and intent of the individual. For example if you create an intent to heal yourself of a certain ailment, and keep that focus and awareness on that thought and at the same time listen to healing sounds it will create a state for healing to occur.

Intention is the catalyst that works along with healing sounds, mantras, affirmations, sacred words, to increase the effects of healing. A thought to heal holds the power to bring the intention of a person to completion. Diane Mandle, Certified Sound Healer, says in her article on Sound Energy from the website, www.soundenergyhealing.com/pages/aboutSoundEnergy.html , that,

"The role of "Intention" in healing is a strong one. When combined with sound, intention in the form of mantras, prayer or affirmation such as Aum or Om can greatly increase the vibrations and thus effect the healing."

Dr. Masauro Emoto shows in his work with sound affecting water molecules, how intention effects the way that water freezes. Positive intentions create beautiful patterns like snowflakes, while a negative intention put on the water will create ugly patterns. By concentrating on a certain thought, one is able to change the structure of the thing that one is focusing on. By putting focus on a certain area, one is actually creating an intention, directing energy which can be described as qi, chi, universal sound current, to be put on that part that needs to be healed. This thought energy when coupled with sound, influences the object to shift and move to its level to create a place for healing to take place. Lynn McTaggart states in her book "The Intention Experiment", “Perhaps intention also operates as highly

coherent frequencies, changing the very molecular makeup and bonding of matter."

The first step to any healing method is creating an intent - A thought that is directed to the part that needs to be healed. Focusing all your energy on that certain thought and letting the music carry that thought. Lynn McTaggart relates in the same book, the intention experiments done with monitoring various healers and monks revealed that we can change the structure of our brains through our thoughts.

Instruments and Technologies Used for Sound Healing

"...One of the most powerful ways to heal the individual is to play back the missing frequencies at a low octave which corresponds to brain wave frequencies. What happens here is quite remarkable and really beautiful. The body is simply helped to heal itself by activating the control center in the brain that looks after this healing." www.biowaves.com.

In today's world we find many instruments and devices and techniques to create high frequency sounds that facilitate the healing process. One such simple but powerful instrument used in sound healing is Tibetan Singing Bowls. This instrument has been used for ages in healing the psyche and the body of its ailments. The Buddhists and Tibetan monks used this technique to gain a calm, still mind so that they could alter a deeper connection with God. In this way they are able to keep the physical body in optimal health, as all systems are operating at the right frequency. How are these singing bowls used? The Tibetan bowls are struck in specific patterns, which creates sound vibrations at a very deep frequencies. These rhythmic vibrations reach the brain and nervous system, the brain waves then align themselves to the vibrational sounds of the Tibetan bowls creating a deep sense of peace.

What actually happens is that the sound vibrations connect with the brain waves that facilitate relaxation. Thus, there is a decrease in the heart rate and breathing pattern, causing the stressed body to relax. Diane Mandle, a certified Sound healer in her article, taken from the website www.soundenergyhealing.com/pages/aboutsoundenergy.html, explains the effects of Tibetan
Singing Bowls,

" The harmonic vibrations engage the relaxation reflex and slow the respiratory, brain, and heart rate and disrupt the pain reflex creating a deep sense of well-being."

In the same website, she also answers to the question, what does the sound from the bowls actually do? By answering, " It puts your physical, emotional, and spiritual energies back into alignment. When these energies are aligned, the needed energy balancing or chakra balancing creates the perfect container for healing."

Another simple device used in sound healing is Tuning Forks. Tuning forks are placed on each side of the head. The tuning forks are then struck together to create

a deep sound for several seconds. This sound works to balance the left and right sides of the brain. Using tuning forks on a person with a headache can relieve one of the pain associated with it. A headache usually occurs when there is an accumulation of blocked energies on both sides of the head and by putting tuning forks on both sides of the head and then striking them. A vibration and sound is released which shifts the blocked energy to move into alignment. A shift takes place in your frequency and the blocked energy is released. Once this happens the headache is gone, and energy is restored to its natural state.

Another simple but effective sound healing device is the Didjeridu, an Australian Aboriginal sacred instrument that is used for healing. The didjeridu is basically an instrument made from the limb of a sacred tree, which only the Shamans can obtain by entering an altered state. The tree limb is then shaped and hollowed out to form the basis for circular breathing to occur. When one blows into it, it creates a deep frequency tone along with various other tones. This deep tone has the ability to transform the brain waves to create physical healing. This sound brings about a change in the brain wave activity, resulting in physical healing and psychological well-being. Jonathan Goldman describes the didjeridu as the main instrument used by the Aboriginals in their sacred rituals. In his book, " Healing Sounds: The Power of Harmonics",

Jonathan states,

"...the didjeridu was used for healing. A person with an illness would lie on the ground and the shaman would blow the didjeridu over the afflicted part of the person to facilitate the healing. This struck me as being very similar to some resonant healing techniques..."

Using one's own voice to create healing is the most common of all healing devices. The Gyume and Gyuto monks of Tibet utilize their voice to create a scared sound called the Tibetan One Voice Chord. It is a sound made up of three notes, which the monks chant at the same time. The notes they chant are A, D and F#, on the western musical scale. They chant all three notes at once and the combination of these three notes create a very deep, animal like sound, like the roar of a bull or some wild animal. This deep frequency sound is able to transform the physical form on the DNA level- The structure of the living systems are thus affected creating a harmonious resonance frequency of each system. Jonathan Goldman states in his book "Healing Sounds: The Power of Harmonics", that,

"...We have found that many sacred chants of the different traditions are full of high frequency overtones which offer stimulation to the brain."

Chanting accesses deeper levels of relaxation and meditative states. It creates a trance-like state in which one is able to heal many diseases such as psychological disorders, immune system imbalances, strokes etc. Jonathan Goldman further describes in the same book, the work of Alfred Tomatis with sound, and how he explains that sound affects the nervous system and brain, to bring about healing;

"In particular, Tomatis found that sounds which contain high frequency harmonics, such as those found in Gregorian Chants, are extremely beneficial. It is these high

frequencies (around 8000 Hz) which are capable of charging the central nervous system and the cortex of the brain."

Dr. Tomatis has created a sound healing device called "Electronic Ear" that enables one to learn to listen to high frequency tones. According to Alfred Tomatis humans have forgotten how to really listen, we hear but not listen. He says that we need to re-learn the process of really listening to sound and the sounds within that sound.

In 1976 the "Hemi-Sync" device was created by Robert A Monroe. This technology uses sound to alter brain wave activity. The Hemi-Sync plays binaural beats, subtle background sounds with music to bring about a state of relaxation to facilitate the healing process. The goal of this machine is to bring both sides of the brain activity to work harmoniously. Sound has the ability to alter brain waves. There are five types of brainwaves that are common to man. Gamma, Beta, Alpha, Theta and Delta. The Gamma brain waves operate at extremely hyper brain wave states. Individuals in this state, are extremely alert and possess a creative nature. The brainwaves operate at 30 Hertz and above. The normal frequency of our brain wave is that of Beta. Beta is the normal awakened state of an individual on a daily basis. These waves operate at 12-18 Hertz. Sound healing or sound therapy moves the beta brain waves into the deeper levels of alpha and theta brain waves. Alpha is the state where one begins to relax, and the waves operate at a frequency of 7-13 Hertz. The fourth brainwave Theta is a deeper brainwave state of relaxation and dreaming. The waves operate at 3-7 Hertz. The last brainwave state is called Delta state, and the brainwaves operate at a low frequency of .5-3 Hertz.

So, what the "Hemi-Sync" device does is create binaural beats that break down into two different rhythms, one for each ear. The binaural beats along with the music, bring the left and right hemispheres to work in sync, creating a new third sound. This new sound brings about the energy to create a deep state of relaxation, It basically brings the brain activity to the alpha state, where healing begins. In this alpha state one is able to experience healing of various ailments such as anxiety, stress or any mental diseases. The benefits of using this device are increased concentration and focus, a relaxed state of mind, along with low stress and anxiety levels.

Another Metaphysical device that uses sound as a healing tool is called "The Rife machine". This device is used to heal viruses such as cancer. Viruses have their own special sound frequencies and can be destroyed by applying the right sound. The Rife Machine uses frequencies to destroy diseased cells from the physical body. This device was created by Royal Rife, who through extensive research and experiments discovered that cancer cells could be destroyed through the use of sound frequencies. If one was able to match the frequency of the cancer cells then, they could be destroyed. Thus, giving room for new cells to reproduce themselves creating a healed state. But this technology was never fully incorporated into the American Western society.

Sound healing tapes and CDs is another way to incorporate sound healing into your daily life. Sounds or music is pre-recorded with subtle sounds like binaural beats and solfeggio frequencies. These frequencies are embedded within the music

to alter brainwaves and create a state of well-being and begin the healing process. The brain is able to shift from one state to another, when influenced by outside stimulus, such as sound. Sound is one way of creating a shift in the frequency of these brain waves. The healing instruments and modern Metaphysical Technologies are based on this knowledge. The purpose is to influence the brainwave frequency to facilitate change in the diseased body, thus to restore health. Repetitive stimulation of the brainwaves through sounds causes the vibrations of the brainwaves to increase and match to the resonance of the sound being played, causing a shift in the diseased state, a letting go of the toxic blocked energies, creating space for new healing energy to move in and create harmony once again.

To try out different healing sounds you can check on youtube, or Elke Neher's Sound Healing Website.

https://www.freedomconsciousness.com/
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAk6mv0DX7HP6_iyfhC3hDg,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuZQsmRvq-4,

"...sound can be used to change disharmonious frequencies of the body back to their normal, healthful vibrations." Jonathan Goldman

Summary and Conclusion

Sound healing is a vibrational energy medicine, the medicine of the future. Through sound we can transform disease into health and well-being. In sound healing therapy we are using energy to heal broken, blocked, missing states of energy.

Energy is the building block of all that is in existence, vibrating at different frequencies. An atom and its subatomic particles, are energy moving at its own frequency. Energy at different frequencies creates all the things we see around us, all that is in the universe. Each and everything moves, and vibrates at its own frequency. The whole universe is vibrating and moving at different frequencies. Our whole being is built upon an energy systems, the auric bodies and the subtle energy centers. The auric bodies are the energy fields, surrounding our physical being. Whereas the subtle energy centers are the chakras that connect all these bodies into one whole, complex being.

Illness comes about when there is an imbalance in the vibrations of our being. This imbalance can come from negative thoughts and emotions, bad eating and drinking habits, smoking, and inhaling toxins, etc. Everything we do effects us to some extent. When we listen to high vibrational sounds, or when we create high vibrational tones by chanting holy words, mantras, or affirmations, we are able to cause a shift and rise of those vibrations, bringing about resonance. To heal the physical body through sound, it is important to be aware that resonance must occur. Resonance happens when the frequency of disease is matched by the frequency being played (or the sound being used to heal). This is raising of the vibrations by matching and bringing the slow vibrations up. So once this happens, resonance

occurs. That is the vibrational frequencies are matched and move at the same vibrations, causing entrainment to occur. The energy of the two sounds or vibrations become joined together and move at the same frequency. It brings the blocked/missing vibration to move at the sound being played. It raises the slow vibrations to match the higher and joining together moving at similar vibrations. Once that happens healing can begin, but repetitive use of that sound therapy is needed to make that higher vibrational frequency a habit.

This gradually begins the healing process. Therefore, the important thing to note here is that healing will only happen when there is a shift or change in the present state of vibrations. In modern medicine we find that a lot of equipment and surgical procedures cause the same thing to happen- a shift in the vibrations of the current diseased state to cause healing. For example, when an artery is blocked and a bypass procedure take place. This cutting of the skin and tissue causes a shift in the current vibrations of the heart patient. The bypass procedure releases the blocks in the arteries. This is a change in the vibrations. This type of procedure heals the heart, but it's not complete healing. If the patient does not change the way he/she thinks or the bad habits that cause the illness in the first place. If he/she keeps up with the bad habits, he/she will come back to the same diseased state. The same goes for metaphysical technologies they also work to shift and change the vibrational frequencies to bring about well-being of the self.

As we go deeper into the study of sound healing we see that sound has the ability to effect the mind. Sound frequencies stimulate the brain centers, the nervous system and align themselves, reinforcing resonance to occur. Energy is restored to its natural state, creating a perfect place for healing to take place.

The power to heal oneself truly lies within us, dormant, waiting to be acknowledged. By acknowledging that we are truly beings operating on various energy levels we can begin to understand how sound frequencies can correct imbalances and out-of-tune body organs. As each disease and virus has its own unique frequency, we can match that frequency and destroy the diseased cells. New cells can thus be generated creating a transformational effect. Sound healing is truly a powerful way to bring about healing of disease.

“When individuals change, the whole planetary consciousness also evolves. As above, so below. The evolving patterns of individual human awareness can eventually produce larger changes in the global macrocosm. As increasing numbers of human beings begin to grow spiritually through the inner understanding of their illnesses and energy blockages, and as they begin to realize their true divine nature, they will also start to recognize that all people are subtly connected to each other and to the world around them. As the enlightened consciousness of this small segment of humanity grows, it will have a ripple effect upon the minds of the greater planetary whole. The rising tide of increased spiritual awareness will begin to affect larger numbers of people through a kind of cosmic resonance effect. When enough minds are changed to reached the critical threshold necessary to move the entire global consciousness to a new level of healing and awareness, we will have arrived at the New Age (New Era).” Richard Gerber, Vibrational Medicine, New Choices for Healing Ourselves.

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Further Readings

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Unified Field: Modern Theoretical Physics Meets Ancient Metaphysics

A Course in Anger Management by Zhang Lee & Sam Jorge

Anger management aims to control anger, an emotion that prompts a response. People struggle with anger due to a lack of interpersonal and self-control skills. Research shows negative emotions impair impulse control. Training can help see

anger as unwanted rather than necessary. Strategies like forgiveness, sleep, exercise, and a good diet can prevent anger. Professionals such as therapists, counselors, social workers, and psychologists assist those managing anger.

The negative effects of anger have been documented throughout history. Advice for managing seemingly uncontrollable rage has been provided by ancient philosophers, religious figures, and modern psychologists. Seneca the Younger (4 BC – 65 AD) recommended preemptively avoiding confrontational situations, adopting perspective taking, and refraining from provoking individuals prone to anger. Other philosophers, such as Galen, echoed Seneca's advice by suggesting the assistance of a mentor in reducing anger.

In contemporary times, the concept of controlling anger has evolved into anger management programs grounded in psychological research. Classical psychotherapy-based anger management interventions emerged in the 1970s. Success in treating anxiety with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) interventions developed by Meichenbaum inspired Novaco to adapt stress inoculation training for anger management. Stress and anger share similarities, allowing for a successful modification of treatment approaches. Both stress and anger are triggered by external stimuli, mediated through internal processing, and expressed in either adaptive or maladaptive forms. Meichenbaum, followed by Novaco, utilized each aspect of experiencing these emotions as opportunities for enhancing the patient's overall well-being.

In the enduring film Network, Peter Finch says “I’m mad as hell and I’m not going to take it anymore.” Though not all, or even most, pursued an aggressive course of action and rebellion, something seemed to resonate. After all, didn’t we have a right to be angry? Wasn’t there so much to be angry at? Isn’t there still? Big businesses treat employees like disposable assets and demand ever-increasing sacrifices. Hollywood and media barraging us with images and messages about how to evaluate our condition, make decisions, and ensure our happiness through purchase, a diet, a pill, or a lifestyle. Journalism is rising in ever-increasing notes of provocative sensationalism aimed at triggering our emotional responses. The all-outtelling of resources and labor of disadvantaged nations and the poor. There is so much to be angry about. If we were to note on the evening news, or in the newspaper or periodicals, that twenty to forty percent of our country was operating under the influence of a chemically altered state (anger) what might be the reaction? A demand for action? Self-protective measures? Compassion for the unfortunate who fall prey to addiction.

One in ten people suffers from workplace burnout that leads to anger, as noted by Carolyn Jones in her book.

Overcoming Anger

Many people suffer from "toxic anger," says Doyle Gentry, author of *Anger Free*. Around 20 to 40 percent of Americans show signs of stress, fear, or anger—each part of a primitive survival mechanism. This system releases chemicals that prepare us for conflict, but today's triggers are traffic jams, work memos, or sarcastic comments. High emotional intensity doesn't equate to rational feelings.

These heightened emotions cause chemical changes that impact our thinking, perspective, and judgment, making us comparable to being "under the influence." This phenomenon has led to the rise of the "anger management" industry. However, there are no standardized guidelines to monitor or regulate this industry effectively.

The aim of anger management is to create a method for reducing the automatic anger reflex by introducing conscious awareness of how and why we react, and to develop acceptable alternative behaviors to destructive expressions of anger. The goal of this information is to provide a comprehensive overview of the types of approaches, the rationale behind them, and practical skills and techniques for managing anger.

The focus is primarily on outwardly expressed anger through verbal or physical outbursts. However, individuals who do not exhibit explosive anger may still benefit from learning how to manage their anger or improve their anger management strategies. One example describes a person who claims to allow no anger in her surroundings, home, or family. This approach can lead to long-term negative effects and is an unrealistic claim.

She manages her anger by controlling the schedules and activities of those around her, attempting to prevent confrontations that could lead to anger outbursts. Despite her efforts, she experiences significant anger. Anger is an internal pressure resulting from frustration and unmet expectations, but it can be managed into positive change. Small adjustments to the environment, expectations, or belief system can sometimes reduce unnecessary anger.

By suppressing and avoiding anger, this individual contributed to dysfunctional family dynamics without recognizing the impact of her anger on the situation. The behavioral patterns became deeply ingrained, limiting spontaneous interactions that foster growth and satisfying relationships. Resolving such complex situations often requires family or relationship counseling rather than solely anger management courses.

Anger management can serve as an initial step, a tool for prompt insight and change, or an element of deeper, complementary counseling. Generally, anger management emphasizes the development of awareness and consciousness of behavior, and practical skills to guide individuals (with or without assistance) in effecting changes in behavior that have yielded unsatisfying or detrimental results. There is irony in how anger is often treated as a tangible thing, while prevailing opinion suggests it is merely a thought or belief needing development or change.

*This approach becomes a question of an age-old problem in nonquantifiable arenas: focusing on solutions rather than problems. This concept is illustrated by a

Zen parable: “A student approached his master about problems with anger. The teacher responded, ‘Fine. Just give it to me.’ The student replied, ‘I cannot, for I am not angry now.’ The teacher said, ‘Next time you are angry, bring it to me.’ The student stated, ‘It is not something I can bring.’ The teacher concluded, ‘You cannot bring anger because it is not a tangible item and not a part of you. Joy and happiness are real; focus on these when tempted to believe in anger.’”*

In addition to techniques and anger management approaches, this course will define anger from physical and sociological perspectives, considering its inclusion under the broader umbrella of metaphysical sciences. Several works are referenced within this course and reflect a broad selection. Included are those valuable or noteworthy for their information or accessibility, as well as representative types of works available in publication. Many more works have contributed to the overall research effort. No author’s work is specifically cited internally without reference.

Anger Management Part I

To discuss anger management, it is essential to understand precisely what we aim to control. Anger is a universal emotion experienced by everyone. Suppressing anger can be detrimental to one's health, a topic covered in detail in Part IV of this course. But what exactly constitutes anger? While we have all felt it, identifying it can be challenging. As illustrated by Mr. Shakespeare, perception plays a crucial role. For instance, an individual with a predominantly Midwestern American background might misconstrue a "discussion" among individuals from a traditionally Italian cultural context as an expression of “anger.”

With elevated voices, passionate viewpoints, and hand gestures, one might interpret these actions as signs of anger, particularly within the framework of their cultural upbringing. However, these behaviors may not necessarily be perceived as anger by someone from an Italian background, where such expressions are viewed differently. The New World Dictionary defines anger as "A feeling of displeasure resulting from injury, mistreatment, opposition, etc., and usually showing itself in a desire to fight back against the supposed cause of this feeling." Every working definition of anger acknowledges it as a "feeling" and/or "emotion."

Within the definition provided by the New World Dictionary, anger is acknowledged as a fundamental emotion. Most mental health professionals concur that anger has played a critical role in human evolution and development. It is an instinct integral to self-preservation. The absence of anger may lead individuals to succumb to passivity in the face of opposition, which evolutionarily would result in the loss of livestock, land, food, and freedom—elements vital for survival, civilization, and the establishment of leisure time (time not spent in the pursuit of food and shelter), which allows for education and the cultivation of higher faculties. Returning to our dictionary, we note that the term "anger" originated from Old Norse, Greek, and German words meaning "constriction," "strangulation," and "fear."

As civilization and language progressed, the word carried connotations honestly derived from the causative feelings associated with anger. Internally, we recognize anger within ourselves as a feeling or emotion, but it is more often perceived, felt, and discussed in terms of actions and their consequences. In a contemporary context, this metaphor can be extended to illustrate how anger can serve as a stimulus encouraging the pursuit of better wages, more desirable employment, deeper relationships, and opportunities for personal growth or self-expression. Essentially, anger compels us not to resign ourselves as victims to particular situations. This concept is thoroughly documented by Willard Gaylin in *The Rage Within*. While most significant works on anger management acknowledge anger's roots in the "fight or flight" evolutionary development, Gaylin extensively and allegorically elucidates this at its primal state, rather than assuming the reader's understanding of "fight or flight."

According to Gaylin, “Rage and fear are ‘emergency emotions’ established biologically to protect us from danger when the meaning and nature of ‘danger’ were unequivocal.” The body reacts physically to threats with an autonomic biological response, priming itself for direct confrontation. Muscles, functions, secretions, hormones, and chemicals all instinctively and automatically respond to perceived threats or dangers. Though the threat and danger response remains unchanged from its primitive origin, the more civilized threats and dangers encountered today are generally far removed from what could be termed "life-threatening."

Nevertheless, anger persists because we continue to perceive threats and dangers from various evolving sources and for numerous reasons. We possess biological mechanisms that, if left unchecked and unmanaged, hinder rather than enhance our chances of survival. The individual becomes prepared for conflict; however, the target of this conflict is often misdirected. We rarely confront the source of our anger directly but instead its representative: the boss's memo, a clerk adhering to manager policies, or a television report on crime or terrorism. When fixation occurs on the agent of anger as a specific person or group, the potential for damaging and abusive relationships arises. Fortunately, intelligence offers an alternative to fixed instincts.

Emotions can affect the memory and perception of the event that triggers them. Anger is associated with emotions such as fear, rage, pride, jealousy, depression, anxiety, and feelings of betrayal, self-doubt, disapproval, deprivation, and manipulation. The presence of these associations can make even a mundane environment seem more hazardous and thus be perceived as a threat.

Anger may be important but is not always a positive experience unless managed effectively. According to Albert Ellis, unmanaged anger can be linked to other emotions like pride and jealousy, and influence actions through senses of betrayal, deprivation, and disapproval. Willard Gaylin, in The Rage Within, emphasizes the importance of perception, noting that "the supposed cause of this feeling" highlights the significance of how events are perceived. He states, “Fear and anger were

designed to serve as responses to threats to our survival…not affronts to our pride, status, position, or dignity."

This linkage between the biological emergency response system and our emotional perception of events has historical roots. While necessary for the development of civilization, anger can also negatively impact it when expressed through outdated and counterproductive behaviors.

Anger Management Part II

Anger has historically been a catalyst for wars as well as an agent in fostering peace. It has influenced individuals to become both villains and heroes.

The outcome of any event involving anger depends on how it is managed—whether it is directed towards constructive expression or manifests in retaliation, vengeance, or self-justification.

Early human myths, fables, and literature offer narratives about personal conflicts involving anger, including its active forms such as revenge and retaliation. For example, Aesop’s stories often depict “anger management” victories, where wisdom and clear thinking prevail over emotionally reactive antagonists. Conversely, the Brothers Grimm presented a darker perspective by portraying punishment of wrongdoers through death or imprisonment. Greek mythology frequently depicts gods showing anger over perceived slights or betrayals. Zeus sentenced Prometheus to eternal torment, while Hera sought revenge on Zeus' lovers. The tale of Oedipus serves as a narrative adapted with psychological depth in contemporary storylines. Freud popularized Oedipus through psychoanalytic theories, but the story's enduring resonance lies in its portrayal of anger and revenge culminating in a tragic outcome. Likewise, Shakespeare's tragedies are driven by characters' anger and rage, propelling the narrative forward: Richard III's cynicism, Titus' wrath, Iago's malice, and Lear's indignation. Two specific examples highlight this theme: Iago's deceit towards Othello, leading to Othello's anger at Cassio and subsequent destructive actions, including his suicide; King Lear's rejection of his youngest daughter leading to the collapse of his kingdom.

Modern drama often reflects societal complexity by presenting less definitive acts and consequences, frequently portraying simmering anger against impersonal forces such as businesses and political offices. In societal disputes, small-scale conflicts involve nomadic herders or hunter-gatherers forming familial and societal units for self-preservation and dominance. On a larger scale, historically significant conflicts have arisen from perceived injuries, such as the abduction of Helen of Troy, which instigated the prolonged Trojan War, resulting in widespread devastation. Similar provocations have sparked numerous historical skirmishes and battles, notably the French and English conflicts over Normandy and Burgundy, which saw territorial changes multiple times over centuries.

While righteous anger can be utilized in politics, hindsight, or as an expedient justification of conscience (such as Hitler’s treatment of the Jews, the Crusades for the Holy Land, or the U.S. Wars on Terrorism), it is more often derived from an

immediate fear of potential future injury or mistreatment. This represents the classic “fight or flight” response that can exist, be created, or manipulated to inspire fear of survival threats.

The desire to address a perceived cause of displeasure resulting from injury, mistreatment, and opposition is driven by perception. Both sides of a conflict will, by definition, experience anger, and the manner in which that anger is managed will determine its expression. In situations where displeasure is targeted at a supposed cause, a means to fight is identified.

However, if inflammatory situations are managed effectively, there can be positive outcomes. For example, Gandhi’s successful campaign against British rule through non-violent means demonstrated this. Despite years of oppression and various attempts to overthrow British rule, India remained under Great Britain’s control. Gandhi, an English-educated Indian who was relatively privileged, started to identify with his Indian heritage rather than his assumed identity as a pseudo-Englishman. He experienced a moralistic sense of anger towards the perceived causes of injury and mistreatment. Instead of impulsively reacting, Gandhi managed his emotions into actions that were calculated and effective, ultimately leading to the overthrowing of an empire.

Similarly, the U.S.A. civil rights movement of the 1960s followed Gandhi’s approach. Previously, the anger on both sides of the civil rights issue had either blocked constructive action or resulted in violence and retaliation. While individual strides were made, collectively the aggressive rhetoric and stances reinforced fears and polarized the issue. Dr. King maintained focus, channeling his anger into positive actions such as non-violent protest and rational debate. This approach contributed to legislative and cultural shifts during the period.

These situations are archetypal scenarios that could potentially lead to armed conflict and autocratic resolutions, wherein a repressed class or group of people rise in rebellion with an outcome where the winner takes all. The victors typically exert despotic control over the defeated through punitive measures and acts of retribution, often recording or rewriting history in their favor. Despite the occurrence of violence, the absence of armed conflict eliminated the necessity for retaliatory actions and created opportunities for dialogue and progress.

Additionally, examining the dilemma in Ireland, similar situations have demonstrated that negotiations can serve as a positive mechanism for managing anger. In these instances, anger facilitates the expression and communication of feelings, leading to constructive outcomes. The Irish situation dramatically exemplifies this modern metaphor on a large scale.

After decades of hostilities and emotional rage resulting in warlike and terrorist activities from both sides, a more peaceful and constructive approach was adopted through dialogue that earnestly addressed perceptions of injury, mistreatment, opposition, and oppression from both parties. Similar to any discipline in anger management, there were trials and errors in practicing a constructive method for

expressing anger. Although peace may still be tenuous, it has successfully broken a cycle of perception and habituation that previously led to failure.

Unmanaged anger hinders positive interactions with oneself and others. Historical examples of war show fear, anger, and rage being provoked on a large scale, but it's crucial to recognize individual efforts to resist succumbing to anger.

Managed anger can lead to significant change by addressing injustice and promoting peace and healing. This process starts at an individual level, either encouraging positive action or avoiding manipulation into harmful behavior.

What challenges are we facing as a society? In the recent past, events such as Truman Capote’s narrative in “In Cold Blood” and Charles Manson’s brutal actions captured national attention. Today, we observe incidents like road rage, school shootings perpetrated by adolescents, political unrest leading to bombings of government buildings, and office workers taking hostages. Could these be manifestations of primitive "fight or flight" responses? Examining definitions of anger from contemporary counselors and therapists reveals insights into this phenomenon.

1. “A combination of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when you are frustrated by conditions or treated unfairly. Negative internal feelings accompanied by the perceptual disorder.”— Harry Kaufmann and Seymour Feshbach as cited by Albert Ellis in Anger.

2. “Anger is a delusion that focuses on an animate or inanimate object, feels it to be unattractive, exaggerates its bad qualities, and wishes to harm it.”—Buddhist teaching

3. “Anger is a natural response that all people have. It is caused by two basic things: A) Frustration; not getting what we want, especially if we were expecting to get it, and B) Feeling that others do not respect us or care how we feel.”—Robert John McCrary, Ph.D.

4. “An emotional state that varies in intensity from mild irritation to intense fury and rage.”—Charles Spielberger, Ph.D.

5. “Anger is a feeling…your response to the world not going as you wish.”—John Lee, Facing the Fire.

6. “Anger is for our protection against something that hurts or threatens to hurt us.”— William DeFoore

Combining various definitions, anger can be described as a feeling caused by hurt or frustration, with a desire to address the object causing this feeling. This aligns closely with another definition: “A feeling of displeasure resulting from injury, mistreatment, opposition, etc., usually showing itself in a desire to respond to the supposed cause of this feeling.” Both the Buddhist teaching and the dictionary suggest that the feeling may not be justified or may be misdirected. Another perspective defines anger as a feeling which does not necessarily include a desire

to destroy or cause personal harm (Mary Paquette, Ph.D., RN). Freud's work on anger management specifically distinguished anger from aggression.

Webster defines aggression as a forceful action intended to dominate or hostile behavior often caused by frustration. Anger management views anger as instinctual and biologically programmed, but aggression is not necessary. It's important to distinguish anger from aggressiveness. Managed anger avoids aggressive hostility, which leads to random and unprovoked violence, such as murder over parking spots, fights over tickets, or mass killings in schools and workplaces. This violent behavior cannot be justified as an emergency survival mechanism.

Anger Management Part III

With anger (and its components of fear, anxiety, and rage) being a common emotional and mental state among humans and many other species, one might ask if there is scientific and medical data that can assist in understanding it. The answer is both yes and no. While research has been conducted and certain behaviors or symptoms are well studied and documented, our understanding of the neurochemistry of anger has seen limited advancement. Research in this area began with Freud, who linked anger, as well as most other emotions, to unconscious fear. While his theories and conclusions were often simplistic and narrow in scope, leading to some modern criticism, his emphasis on hidden fears was valuable for initiating a process of thinking about fear and anger.

Walter Rudolf Hess made the first scientific study of anger in the 1920s. Electrode insertion into various mid-brain areas, especially the thalamus, revealed its role in basic animalistic drives and instincts. Direct stimulation produced predictable defensive behaviors, leading to significant breakthroughs and further replication by other researchers.

The subject of the research was not a human, but a cat. J.W. Papez initiated a line of inquiry that was further expanded by other researchers. This investigation involved "mapping" the specific circuit of the thalamus and additional subcortical structures associated with the primitive mechanisms of emotional behavior. This "circuit" is now known as the limbic system and is recognized as the central pathway linking perception with metabolism and emotion. The existence of a clear map made psychosurgery inevitable. Operations were performed on epilepsy patients who did not respond to drug treatments for their survival. Lobotomies and other cortical surgeries were employed as a last-resort effort for intractable psychotic conditions.

However, physiologists increasingly acknowledged that human anger and emotional rage are much more complex than the basic aggression responses found in animals. Despite these increasingly complicated differentiations, sweeping generalizations were made about controlling social anger based on limited anatomical studies of specific rage (The Rage Within). Further studies are necessary to fully understand and mitigate anger. Beyond the physiology and anatomy of anger, there is also a significant gap in knowledge regarding the neurochemistry of anger.

The human brain remains complex, resisting our attempts to classify its functioning components into clear cause-and-effect processes. Experiments have yet to yield definitive results as the brain frequently provides new information beyond current understanding. Factors such as system redundancies, interconnectivity, and the ability to create new synaptic pathways to repair damaged elements contribute to this complexity.

Thought processes and emotions continue to resist precise physical definitions. Modern research on anger began in the 1980s with the development of personality "types." The Type A personality was linked to heart disease, and according to Dr. Charles Spielberger from the University of Southern Florida, the significant factor was identified as anger. While pharmaceuticals can achieve positive outcomes for conditions like depression, attention deficit, and aggression, it is important to recognize that these drugs do not consistently work for all patients or across different time periods for the same patient.

Dr. Albert Ellis, founder of the Institute for Rational-Emotive Behavior Therapy, states that many books on anger management fail to work effectively in all situations. Although biased towards his approach, his point holds true given the abundance of publications by various authors, ranging from professionals to laymen and pseudopsychologists. The internet also offers numerous resources with questionable advice from anonymous sources.

Many credible insights come from practicing professionals, making it hard to categorize methods into specific schools of thought. There are also numerous coaches and classes available, with Anderson & Anderson being a prominent global provider. Despite their certification claims, the market lacks standards or controls. Most programs emphasize understanding, identifying, and managing angry emotions.

The effectiveness of relaxation techniques in anger management is disputed, with the APA not taking an official position. There are numerous approaches to anger management, but many methods are confusing or bizarre, according to W. Doyle Gentry. Chronic anger is a behavior learned over years, and brief interventions are unlikely to change it unless the environment also changes. The severity of the anger problem and the subject's willingness to seek help are crucial factors. Severe cases often need a combination of techniques and professional supervision. Less severe cases may benefit from these methods without requiring extensive care.

A subject who has been court ordered to attend Anger Management counseling for an outburst over a traffic violation, or attends under pressure from a partner or relative, may be less responsive than the subject who voluntarily seeks help recognizing their need for it. They have already started taking responsibility for their actions and experiences. With these considerations in mind, what follows is an overview of prominent methods of anger management, categorized but not mutually exclusive. Ellis recommends combining all methods except venting.

The categories do not necessarily reflect current anger management styles but groupings based on predominant approaches or appeal.

- Gestalt
- Venting, a less favored approach
- Prayer, meditation, and religious-based discipline
- Behavioral approaches
- Cognitive approaches
- Mnemonic techniques
- Anomalies
- Challenges to change
- Forgiveness

These approaches are segregated for reference purposes and may contain crossover techniques. Not every technique is covered, but rather representative ones.

Gestalt: Gestalt therapy requires specialized training. It focuses on the "experiential present moment," aligning with anger management efforts to access the present moment instead of reacting emotionally according to past patterns. Gestalt also maintains that individuals interact with all living things.

The connection between anger management and Gestalt Therapy is noteworthy, as anger management concentrates solely on deconstructing specific reactive behaviors and establishes new, healthier behavior patterns that foster a more positive interaction with everything. The concept of patterns and symbols is central to Gestalt Therapy, which posits that individuals interpret their lives through symbolic meanings. These symbols must be examined, revised, and redefined in order to liberate individuals from the constraints of outdated behavioral patterns they have adopted.

It is unsurprising that Gestalt Therapy, previously somewhat dormant, has experienced renewed interest and activity as an effective model for anger management. Gestalt Therapy utilizes a cognitive approach where behavior modification occurs through the comprehension, identification, and redefinition of these symbols. It aligns well with other methodologies in that individuals undergoing anger management are rarely reacting solely in the immediate context; rather, they are responding to perceived threats to their survival. This response often involves symbolic transference, wherein insignificant or unrelated events trigger the intense rage observed in those with anger management issues.

Venting: Methods like beating pillows or yelling do not effectively reduce anger. Instead, they can increase aggression. The temporary relief felt is due to exhaustion, not healing. While venting may seem helpful, it does not lead to lasting benefits in anger management. Studies show that even mild subjects can become more hostile with venting. This practice reinforces neural pathways linked to anger, contrary to the goals of anger management therapy.

Prayer, Meditation, and Religious Based Disciplines: *Judy Ford, in Getting Over Getting Mad, states that anger poses a threat to one's well-being. With all the physiological symptoms, biochemical changes, and irrationalities various authors have discussed in relation to anger, there might be an argument for considering*

anger addiction and rage as significant behavioral issues. Expressions such as “battling with demons” or “I just wasn’t myself” are commonly used to describe someone dealing with anger-related symptoms. This analogy suggests viewing anger not as an inherent part of one's identity but as an external issue affecting the person, making it easier to address. The concept behind religious-based disciplines often involves seeing one's true self as inherently pure and spiritual.

Whether perfection is believed to be achievable now or in the future, the underlying desire remains consistent. If faith can eliminate shame, self-recrimination, or other barriers to accepting change, and promote healing, it may warrant consideration and potential acceptance. Many individuals across different disciplines dedicate their lives to understanding divine consciousness, the will of God, selfless existence, or the focus of their beliefs and worship. While summarizing the approach of prayer, meditation, and religious-based disciplines cannot fully capture their complexity, increasing recognition from health professionals acknowledges the positive impact of faith and prayer on health and recovery. Literature on anger management often references prayer or religion due to the growing interest in spirituality and religion, encompassing roughly sixty percent of the population according to some polls. Established social care programs like Alcoholics Anonymous incorporate prayer (particularly Christianity) into their counseling and treatments. Rising personal interest in spirituality and religion, along with overloaded social benefits systems, drive more people to faith-based groups for support. Christian-oriented approaches dominate, although Eastern religious thought—promoting inner peace, non-violence, and selflessness—is also prevalent. Eastern religious practices, especially Buddhism, may be considered practical by Western perspectives. The acceptance of "meditation" over "prayer" has increased through exposure to non-Christian religions within society, despite historical Christian practices involving meditation. Meditation has evolved into an accepted practice beyond religious contexts, with diverse forms and applications. It is included here broadly as

Prayer: *Prayer is communication with God, including pleas for help, affirmations of God's dominion, and expressions of gratitude. Each type provides comfort by connecting to a higher power. Petitions alleviate frustration, affirmations emphasize the process over the outcome, and gratitude recognizes blessings and expects more. Sincere prayer surpasses self-centered beliefs that cause anger. Christian prayer encourages emulating Jesus, who demonstrated tolerance and forgiveness. Matthew 18:22-23 advises forgiving repeatedly, which can be misunderstood without maturity, potentially leading to suppressed anger. Effective anger management requires understanding, not just reciting words or actions.*

The basics are there, but practical understanding is beyond their reach. The problem will certainly not be solved correctly.

Taken within the context of all of Christ’s teachings, this directive is based on the conviction that we are one brotherhood and should love our neighbors as ourselves. This aligns with secular views on anger management, which suggest that irrational beliefs provoke primitive anger responses—self-preservation systems seeing others

as threats. Christian theology argues that this "I" sense of self must die for rebirth in Christ, recognizing the brotherhood of man governed by God.

For prayer to aid in anger management, God must be perceived as compassionate and forgiving. Faith-based programs often present God as Love (1 John 4:8, 16), unconditional and good. Understanding a client's religious faith is crucial; if conflicted or punishment/reward-oriented, it might perpetuate anger. Forgiveness, a key theme in the Lord's Prayer ("Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"), highlights overcoming anger through acceptance and tolerance.

Christian Science, founded by Mary Baker Eddy, focuses on healing through prayer. It defines God with seven synonyms: Love, Soul, Spirit, Mind, Life, Truth, Principle. It teaches that all reality is spiritual, and material existence is an illusion. Anger and other ills are seen as self-delusions, separate from God's goodness. A Christian Science prayer includes affirmations and denials, aiming to shift thought towards divine reality, reflecting character transformation and apparent physical healing.

Meditation and Visualization: Meditation often has religious connotations. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, meditation involves techniques of concentration and contemplation that lead to spiritual awareness or calmness. Webster defines meditate as focusing one’s thoughts or planning in the mind. Buddhist meditation aims for mental concentration leading to spiritual freedom, nirvana.

Meditation can be a valuable tool for managing anger by developing discipline of thought and preparing the mind to accept new beliefs. It helps the brain function in a calm, alpha state, even during activity, promoting peace and detachment from emotional stimuli. Initially serving quietist aims, meditation can later aid rational thinking and belief system reprogramming. Buddhism sees meditation as central, linking insight and wisdom, which is also crucial for effective anger management. Meditation and prayer reduce the sense of self tied to beta wave patterns, fostering a greater sense of calm and objectivity.

Meditation helps us quiet our inner dialogue, allowing us to connect with the oneness of the universe. It is often recommended by writers and involves deep breathing and visualization. The goal of visual meditation is to create a mental image of a safe and peaceful place that can be recalled easily.

Anyone familiar with meditation will understand how creating this mental memory becomes comfortable and habitual over time. Those with emotionally charged memories may find it helpful to mentally "cleanse" these images for visualization purposes. Starting with simple elements like cornfields, beaches, or clouds can help build a detailed and personal visualization.

Several methods can facilitate meditation, such as monotonic chants, sustained "om", or the resonance of a brass bell, according to personal preference. Even without meditating, these exercises along with deep breathing can induce a calm emotional state. While there is no one-size-fits-all formula for meditation, numerous resources are available for guidance. Typically, beginner meditations include:

1) Eyes closed

2) Deep, even breaths

The example of chickens raised in modern farms illustrates their captivity and frustration. Artificial lighting manipulates their perception of time, causing them to produce more eggs. To manage aggression, farmers cut their beaks. This results in food produced with anger, affecting what we consume. Being mindful of our food choices can promote better health and awareness. Thich Nhat Hanh suggests "eating mindfully" by taking smaller bites and chewing thoroughly, turning eating into a form of meditation. This practice enhances nutrition, reduces consumption, and fosters gratitude for our food.

These qualities have been cited as beneficial for overcoming anger addictions. Thich Nhat Hanh highlights not just food, but also the anger consumed through other senses, especially the media. Medical and mental health professionals emphasize the impact of diet and sensory input on stress and anger. Buddhist teachings are practical even without their spiritual aspect. Various "New Age" philosophies also suggest we are innately whole and harmonious with the universe. These philosophies might help individually but often lack organizational support for counseling or social work, so they need to be assessed case-by-case for their potential benefit in anger management programs.

Healing Approaches

Every behavioral approach should include a cognitive element, as behavior change requires some level of understanding. Similarly, mere recognition of a problem won't lead to change without corresponding behavioral adjustments. Behaviorists focus on altering behaviors first, then reflecting on emotions. Though many favor cognitive methods, anger issues often impair rational thinking due to emotional intensity. Therefore, acting and adopting new behaviors can be more effective than solely discussing or reflecting, especially for those who are rational until triggered. The behavioral method establishes actions to manage emotions before uncovering deep-seated beliefs.

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) was created by Albert Ellis in the 1950s 1 2. Ellis was an American psychologist and psychotherapist who developed REBT as a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy. He believed that our thoughts, rather than external events, are the primary cause of our emotional reactions. By challenging and replacing irrational beliefs with more rational and constructive thoughts, individuals can improve their emotional well-being and achieve their goals 2 3.

If you Would you like to know more about how REBT works or its applications the following websites can help;

1: [REBT Network](https://www.rebtnetwork.org/)

2: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Ellis)

3: [Simply Psychology](https://www.simplypsychology.org/rational-emotive-behavior-therapy.html)

Rational Emotive Beha Psychology] ((REBT) is a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy that focuses on identifying and changing irrational beliefs that lead to emotional and behavioral issues. It is based on the idea that our thoughts, rather than external events, are the primary cause of our emotional reactions. By challenging and replacing these irrational beliefs with more rational and constructive thoughts, individuals can improve their emotional well-being and achieve their goals.

REBT emphasizes the importance of self-acceptance, self-responsibility, and respect for free will. It encourages individuals to take responsibility for their thoughts and actions, and to recognize that they have the power to change their beliefs and behaviors. This approach can be particularly effective in addressing issues related to self-esteem, self-worth, and personal growth.

REBT uses three main techniques to manage anger:

*1. **Thinking Your Way Out**: Change your thinking by questioning why something is "terrible" or "too much." Accept your own and others' fallibility, focusing on rational, positive actions rather than labeling things as good or bad.*

*2. **Feeling Your Way Out**: Accept yourself fully, including negative behaviors, to feel more in control. Practice feeling complete anger and then reducing it to keen disappointment and irritation. This technique helps recognize anger signs, differentiate between anger and disappointment, and gain emotional control.*

*3. **Acting Your Way Out**: Employ Gestalt therapy or supervised role-playing to practice changing responses during anger-inducing scenarios.*

Another approach involves watching others re-enact scenarios to learn from their choices. However, expressing anger can reinforce irrational responses and neural conditioning. The third technique, "Acting Your Way Out," is challenging without guidance and suited for advanced individuals with self-awareness. This method addresses deep emotional issues, often rooted in childhood experiences of unfair treatment, leading to ingrained reactions demanding fairness.

In REBT, irrationality is shown by “must” or “should” attitudes. Rationally, we know we are not always treated fairly, but people generally try their best without real motives otherwise. This attitude shapes our reactions in situations and is often triggered. A rational mindset assumes fair treatment or no personal intent behind minor unfairness. Acting rationally involves adopting an attitude of doing one's best and avoiding “shoulds” and “musts”. This approach is easier to coach than explain: decide on your actions and act rationally despite emotions. Ellis compares this to practicing tennis, where persistence and practice are key.

Exercises target specific interpersonal relationships, encouraging maintenance while changing ideas about people, says Ellis. *Practice self-reward and self-penalty for new behaviors:* Reward successes (movie, dessert) and penalize failures by withholding them.

Advised for exercises:

- Take risks challenging beliefs
- Risk rejection by asking for something
- Say "No" or refuse something
- Do something ridiculous or “shameful” in public
- Deliberately fail an important task or act as if you did

These advisements should be contextualized to individual beliefs. Most center on Ellis’ idea that anger roots from extreme childhood "should" or "must" beliefs.

Examples:

- Intentionally fail in a softball game
- Tell a joke in mixed company

Self-determination questions:

- What irrational belief do I want to surrender?
- Can I rationally support this belief?
- What's the evidence against this belief?

These questions can be used to highlight and systematically challenge irrational beliefs. Activities include using songs to interrupt the anger process. When aware of certain behaviors, songs addressing the beliefs' humor can be employed. Examples: (sung to the tune of the Whiffenpoof Song): “I cannot have all my wishes filled. Whine…whine…whine.” (Under the Sea) “Look at me, getting angry. But I know better, I won’t let it get the better of me.” (Smile, Smile, Smile) “Look at my anger trying to trick me, so I’ll Smile, Smile, Smile.”

Participation in writing these songs is beneficial threefold: first, it means there is self-recognition of the belief system; second, it allows active involvement in analyzing and dismantling one's reflexive and irrational beliefs; and third, it provides a useful behavior that substitutes reflexive anger and offers an opportunity for reflection. The feeling and effect are humorous.

Many people have difficulty laughing at themselves, and the songs effectively bypass any posturing or pretense. Other Behavioral Approaches The following are considered “anger intensifiers.” Multiple authors cite them as controllable elements that increase potential for anger but can be eliminated or modified through conscious behavioral choices. This information is sourced from W. Robert Nay’s book, Taking Charge of Anger.

1. Sleep Deprivation. Sleep deprivation has long been recognized for its detrimental effect on rational mental function. An adult should average 8 hours of sleep per 24-hour cycle. Despite individual beliefs otherwise, clinical studies have reinforced this

finding repeatedly. Factors affecting sleep include lack of exercise, excessive alcohol or medicine use, inconsistent schedules, poor sleep habits, and medical conditions such as sleep apnea.

2. Stress. Be mindful of high-stress situations. Excessive noise, stimuli, and crowding—even during activities considered enjoyable or relaxing like clubs or sporting events—induce physiological changes associated with anger reflexes. Numerous tasks, unrealistic deadlines, or significant life changes also generate stress. Even seemingly pleasurable or relaxing events, like vacations or family gatherings, cause stress.

3. Substances. Caffeine, alcohol, and drugs alter body chemistry and amplify or suppress different brain regions and emotional centers, making the outcomes unreliable. While illegal drugs impair clear thinking and many are linked to aggression, even over-the-counter cold remedies can heighten tension. Verify prescription drugs for side effects, particularly those unsuitable for individuals with high blood pressure or hypertension, as they will affect personal tension levels.

4. Sickness. Pain and discomfort increase emotional arousal and decrease resilience, focusing the body's resources and energy on combating illness. All mechanisms operate at reduced levels of normal functioning, making one susceptible to subtle emotional changes and the physiological chemical alterations emotions bring. Irrationality during sickness is commonly acknowledged.

5. Lack of Sustenance. Blood sugar fluctuations significantly impact moods, processing abilities, and physical health. Fatty foods, junk foods, and processed foods—including their chemical components—can alter internal chemical balance. Each of these "intensifiers" can be managed with conscious choices to minimize their influence and impact on behavior.

Keeping a Journal: Writing thoughts and emotions can be an effective anger management tool. Unlike venting, which can increase anger, writing requires rational involvement, helping to disrupt emotional reflexes. Journaling allows clients to review and analyze their thoughts or share them with a counselor. This encourages a rational perspective on their emotions

Be Aware or Become Aware of Your Body: It is important to learn how to scan your body for signs of tension and stress. Symptoms such as a clenched jaw, grinding teeth, a furrowed brow, tight muscles, shallow breathing, and increased pulse rate may indicate stress and tension that contribute to anger. Recognizing these symptoms may help alert you to underlying issues. Incorporating practices like yoga, massage, breathing exercises, meditation, walking, and regular exercise into your daily routine can be beneficial.

When possible, it is essential to pay attention to your breathing, as it is often the first element affected by stress or tension. Reduced oxygen flow can lead to decreased circulation and muscle tension.

Choose a Talisman: A talisman could be an item such as a rock, a small figurine, or a sculpture—anything that can fit in your pocket and serve as a reminder of your

values and intentions. The significance of the object lies in the meaning you invest in it. In both public and private situations, the talisman can provide focus and reassurance discreetly.

An argument that begins with, "Who shall we spend the holidays with?" may actually be about deeper issues such as who holds control, who is willing to compromise, or who is stronger. Often, these underlying issues will emerge as individuals start to recognize their angry feelings. It is important to understand that anger, reinforced over a long period, prefers to remain unexamined. Whether it stems from a mistaken belief or spiritual misapprehension, it is a protective device meant to safeguard one's sense of self.

It provides security, safety, and protection, and typically does not yield willingly. It is essential to acknowledge, particularly within the cognizant model, that there is a risk of uncovering significant trauma or psychological disturbances that should be handled by a mental health professional. No fewer than six bibliographical references caution about the potential for uncovering trauma and evoking extreme emotional memories. Acupressure therapists and acupuncturists operate on similar principles, either blocking or releasing energy fields to free or disperse energy patterns.

An unconscious or unexpected recollection of a previously blocked memory can release a wave of energy as the senses respond to the information provided by the brain as if the event is actually occurring. Here are a few possible reactions:

- Nausea and potential vomiting, which may be both a reaction to the memory and a symbolic emotional purging.
- Dissociation from current reality and potentially from current identity. Depending on the type and severity of the trauma, the individual may temporarily detach from themselves and their surroundings, becoming confused, frightened, or generally unresponsive.
- Self-destructive thoughts and behavior, particularly common among victims of severe physical or sexual abuse. Emotional paralysis due to fear. This occurs when the discovery frightens the subject into emotional withdrawal. Both dissociation and self-destructive behavior can be extremely serious and require the expertise of a mental health professional. Generally, these situations can be avoided by screening anger management clients to prevent individuals with known histories of personality disorders or physical/sexual abuse from entering an anger management program. Anger linked to such traumas requires specialized therapy beyond the scope of anger management treatment practices.

The following points of inquiry and observation can be used as a self-assessment exercise or adapted for discussion with a counselor:

Observe your relationships and anger management patterns (however ineffective they may be). Do you begin with silence or accusations? Are there tears or shouting? Clarify the dynamics of your relationship's anger issues. Be mindful of accusing or self-justifying behaviors. Gather data from this objective research.

Evaluate the outcomes of your choices and actions to determine their effectiveness and satisfaction. Is your intention to “win” or “gain control,” or do you have the courage to allow others their freedom of choice? Do you possess the courage to live with the consequences? This aspect frequently appears in cases of spousal anger and often stems from abandonment issues. Even bosses or children who exert excessive influence on others’ decisions usually harbor fears and concerns about being left out, forgotten, abandoned, or somehow disconnected from others. Engaging in serious inquiry involves asking questions to gain additional perspectives and comparing these findings against our own feelings. This necessitates staying open and listening, regardless of what we discover.

If necessary, we can agree with ourselves to ask questions and record information without engaging in conversation that might lead us to argue our point of view. Inquiry is valuable because things may not be as they seem. We may misperceive or misinterpret situations. Albert Ellis in "Overcoming Destructive Beliefs, Feelings, and Behaviors" suggests that practicing unconditional self-acceptance and acceptance of others can help overcome emotional issues. Conditional acceptance leads to damaging behaviors.

In relationships, conditional expectations limit free expression. In the workplace, they cause stress and controlling behaviors. Practicing unconditional acceptance involves gratitude for what we have, no matter its state. Yearning for what isn’t present leads us away from appreciating the moment.

Communication de-escalates volatile situations and aids discovery and understanding. It eliminates hidden expectations and avoids misunderstandings that trigger anger. Reflect on whether anger shuts down communication. Avoid blaming others or justifying actions to escape responsibility. Stay present to manage anger and reinforce that you have the skills to maintain equilibrium.

Use “I” messages to take responsibility for feelings and avoid escalating conflicts. For example, "I start feeling upset when you..." reinforces personal responsibility and reduces defensiveness. "I" messages help break behavioral patterns and promote constructive dialogue.

Mnemonic Techniques: These cognitive and behavioral tools are effective because of their simplicity. They can disrupt reflexive anger patterns but require cognitive effort to challenge underlying beliefs.

The beauty of Mnemonic Devices is their dual role in cognitive and behavioral practice. However, severe anger issues may need intensive coaching to address irrational justifications. Mnemonics are practical and beneficial at all levels, and practitioners can develop personalized systems.

One method, S.T.O.P., from *Taking Charge of Anger* by W. Robert Nay, Ph.D., stands for:

- **S - Stop** your actions, words, and thoughts.
- **T - Think** about your actions, words, thoughts, and feelings.
- **O - Objectify:** Consider if this is how you want to feel or act.

- **P - Plan** a constructive course of action.

STOP is memorable and effective in disrupting anger reflexes. Tailoring each letter's meaning to individual needs enhances its value as a step-by-step process.

Steps to manage anger:

- **Stop speaking:** Prevent anger from escalating by halting speech and changing your internal dialogue.
- **Leave the scene:** Exit quickly if anger reaches a level 5 out of 10. Do not stay in the argument, even if provoked. Return only when calm.
- Refrain from staring. Individuals experiencing uncontrolled anger or rage often stare as an aggressive, primitive, and provocative action. Direct your gaze towards the floor, ceiling, or another object, avoiding eye contact with the person involved to prevent further escalation of anger.
- Avoid interrupting. It is essential to train oneself to refrain from interrupting and to accept being interrupted without feeling the need to correct the other person. In situations where interruption leads to anger, refer back to point number one.
- Eliminate profanity. From a psychological and behavioral perspective, the use of profanity intensifies anger. Cease using profane language in all situations to immediately reduce levels of rage. For those who struggle with frequent anger, profanity can trigger the release of adrenaline.
- Refrain from recounting "hero stories." These narratives often revolve around how one lost their temper or made sarcastic remarks, highlighting toughness and aggression. Instead, focus on discussing personal faults in the incident and consider what could have been handled differently.
- Cease criticizing and lecturing. It is not our responsibility to highlight the mistakes or shortcomings of others.

Believing: Embrace principles for Peace, Happiness, and Permanent Change

- Practice self-restraint; refrain from constantly expressing oneself. Demonstrating courage and patience by mentally standing one's ground quietly is beneficial.
- Practice kindness instead of seeking revenge. Let go of the urge to "tell the truth about how you feel," and adopt a soft, kind, and tolerant manner of speaking in typically anger-inducing situations.
- Exhibit graciousness rather than criticism. Immediately step down from the role of pointing out flaws in spouses, children, or others, and express gratitude whenever possible.
- Engage in self-examination instead of assigning blame. When feelings of anger arise, promptly acknowledge that the other party may be right and reflect on your contribution to the issue, even if minimal.
- Practice surrender rather than dominance. Learn to let go of your desires or expectations and adopt the mindset of recognizing the validity of others' perspectives.
- Embrace feeling awkward over natural behavior. Experiencing awkwardness indicates that you are deviating from established patterns of conduct.

Communicate: Use new phrases and scripts to manage anger. When an argument arises, the anger addict should say: "You are right. I am crazy. I am bad. I am stupid. I am sick. I am wrong." While these aren't self-affirmations, they help avoid justifying, blaming, criticizing, or defending.

For those addicted to rage, managing anger is crucial. Some books, like The Anger Advantage by Deborah Cox, Ph.D., Karen Bruckner, M.A., L.P.C., and Sally Stabb, Ph.D., promote the benefits of anger, especially for women who have suppressed it. These books encourage recognizing and accepting anger as healthy, focusing on societal issues that discourage female expression of anger. They highlight patterns where others undermine legitimate anger.

The approach relies on anecdotal testimonies to illustrate feminine anger issues in relationships, focusing on active listening and "tabling" emotions during arguments. These strategies are useful but limited to a specific audience. Using these techniques with anger-prone males could be harmful. However, the skill of "active engagement," similar to Buddhist practices, involves silencing inner dialogue and fully listening to understand communication. This should not be used during abuse, but when feeling an initial anger impulse. Comments made should clarify and information should be noted for later review after emotions subside.

Caveat: The Challenges to Change

Making changes in our lives can be one of the most significant challenges, particularly for individuals who have established patterns in a dysfunctional dynamic with others. These patterns impact not only the individual seeking change but also those around them. The interactions may involve multiple partners, some closely connected. It is likely that everyone’s behavior follows well-worn paths, not just the person receiving counseling. While those supporting change may find it easier to abandon old patterns, it can still be uncomfortable or unfamiliar. If others are part of the anger management difficulties, there will likely be obstacles and resistance. Commitment and energy are essential for change, as it is often simpler to remain in habitual routines.

Murray Bowen, the originator of Bowen Family Systems Theory, emphasizes that "in all families there is a powerful opposition to one member defining a more independent self." Although it appears that everyone involved would welcome relief from anger, the process can be unfamiliar and potentially hostile, especially if others in the family unit also struggle with anger management. This opposition arises because not everyone may be ready or willing to commit to change.

Certainly, support would facilitate the process for the client, but one must be prepared for situations where they may face pressure to revert to previous behaviours. If anger issues are part of a larger problem, such as controlling or abusive parents, spouses, or children within the family unit, there are often unconscious "counter moves" designed to prevent disruption of existing patterns that would require others to change as well. In these cases, anger beliefs are present in other individuals who resist self-examination just as strongly as the

subject of anger management. According to Bowen, counter moves inevitably follow successive steps:

- You are wrong. The subject is not only wrong and mistaken in their new beliefs, which challenge the dysfunctional status quo, but there are multiple reasons supporting why they are wrong. This stage poses a significant risk to the anger management subject, as they will hear many internal thoughts voiced openly against them, undermining their commitment to change. Examples include statements like, "You've been wronged, you have a right to be angry," "So you're just not going to stand up for yourself anymore?" and "Are you going to let somebody else tell you how to think?"
- Change back and we will accept you. All is forgiven and forgotten. Things can return to their previous familiarity and comfort, with discomfort arising from the out-of-sync behavior that no longer fits the pattern.
- If you don't change back, these will be the consequences. During the emotional tenuousness of evolving beliefs, threats become very intimidating. The potential loss of family security, love, and support can produce fear, stress, and anxiety, all of which lower the anger threshold. Statements like, "We can't be close if you feel this way," and "How can we have a relationship if you mean that?" may arise. Psychosomatic illnesses such as stress, asthma, heart attacks, and strokes can also be provoked by fear of shifts in relationships.

Another common counter move—especially if the subject uses "time-outs" to disengage from heated situations—is implied selfishness. Taunts and accusations prey on the subject's fragile hold on their emerging convictions. Accusations of disloyalty and cruelty from third parties can compound feelings of anxiety, fear, and discomfort in changing established behaviors, particularly in group dynamics.

The counselor's role is to be acutely aware of these situations. The subject must remain clear about their own positions and priorities, avoiding arguments about the other person's behavior, and not attempting to educate or counsel them. While the problem can be daunting, it should be viewed as a challenge and an opportunity. It is our individual choice to define our status, position, and responsibilities, not the choice of others. Multiple party situations provide an opportunity to extend the anger management practice already underway.

Forgiveness: While forgiveness might initially seem to belong in the section on religious-based techniques, each of the previous approaches indirectly addresses aspects of forgiveness without explicitly naming it. Although prayer and religion may straightforwardly advocate for forgiveness, they often leave the practical demonstration of this principle to individual enlightenment. Simply stating, "I forgive you," and then trying to convince oneself because it is expected or considered sinful to act otherwise, while still harboring feelings of having been wronged, can lead to suppressed anger and potentially psychological disorders.

The commonly known axiom, "forgive and forget," contrasts with the more contemporary saying, "forgive but don't forget." Both suggest forgiveness in practice, but the latter implies that the lesson learned should remain part of our

ongoing conscious actions and assessments. The challenge lies in determining whether individuals have genuinely moved on or if they continue to harbor silent resentment and suspicions that influence their future behaviors.

One definition of forgiveness is to pardon, to relinquish any debt, resentment, or desire for retribution. If the anger reflex pattern is based on the perception of being wronged or threatened, and anger management techniques aim to disengage this reflexive action as inconsistent and detrimental to our well-being, then anger management essentially advocates for relinquishing resentment and the desire for retribution, effectively seeking to pardon the perceived cause of the wrongdoing. In "The Anger Workbook," Les Carter Ph.D. and Frank Minirth M.D. suggest the need to forgive, beginning with forgiving ourselves.

By forgiving ourselves and seeking forgiveness from those who have been exposed to our rage, we encounter the need to forgive others as well. Forgiveness requires a universal approach from those who seek it. Recognizing one's own misjudgments allows individuals to extend this understanding to others. This idea echoes the Christian prayer, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” Carter and Minirth also note that forgiveness requires setting aside “idealistic myths.”

This concept is supported by other cognitive and behavioral approaches, which counsel individuals to practice “unconditional acceptance” and to “allow themselves and others to be human and make mistakes.” "The Anger Workbook" posits that anger stems from unmet needs and unrealized expectations. It is not a matter of "us" versus "them" inhibiting us; rather, it is about a collective "us" striving to meet needs and realize expectations. Acknowledging this diffuses much of what encourages anger and creates a path for forgiveness and healing.

Different Types of Anger

The title of this section is slightly misleading and might more aptly be called “Channels of Anger” or “The Focus of Anger,” as “anger” itself remains relatively unchanged except in its intensity. The predominant writings and approaches generally deal with anger at others. It is the introduction of another perspective, or another set of beliefs, that usually precipitates an anger confrontation through a challenge on our own belief systems. There are, however, other types of anger. None are treated extensively or definitively in current writings and most focus on the “relationship” angers between male and females.

To be sure, the essentials of managing anger remain unchanged: there is a challenge or threat to our person or being, either real or perceived, and we must rationally respond to this challenge or threat and not unconsciously or instinctively react to it. On a cognizant level, however, an understanding of the precise nature of our anger will let us choose the most appropriate tool to managing our anger. The types of anger can be segregated into four general categories:

1. Anger at Self

2. Anger at Others

3. Anger at God

4. Anger at the World.

A common theme of anger management issues, indeed, hearkening back to the original "fight or flight" based perceptions, is a feeling of powerlessness. It happens in the unexpected moment of either real danger or of having our hopes and expectations thwarted. It also happens in the lingering, long term and depressive feeling of powerlessness. There is a certain advantage to recognizing the different types of power that exert themselves on us.

1. Legitimate power. This is the type of power derived from elected or earned positions. Politicians, ministers, officials, the captain of a ship, an airline pilot or someone whose position gives them a certain ability to effect change and make decisions regarding others.

2. Referent power. This power is derived from character and qualities. People defer to the judgment and leadership of such a person, perhaps due to heroic, selfless character, extreme honesty or charisma.

3. Expert power. This power is derived from special knowledge or abilities not present in the general arena, and not possessed by ourselves.

4. Reward Power. This is not only the power to reward money (as in the case of a boss or manager), but also psychological benefits such as comfort, support or encouragement.

5. Coercive power. This is the power to punish or judge. Legitimate coercive power may be held by a priest, magistrate or possibly an employer, but it is the one most often used and abused to control and punish. These types of power, presented by Judy Ford in Getting Over Getting Mad, are particularly useful when used in conjunction with evaluating and determining our channels and focus of anger. By defining the focus and then assessing its type and legitimacy we are often able to reconstruct our own implied or implicit consents and thus we can reform the basis or definition of the relationship.

Anger at Self Anger at oneself is commonly regarded as the cause of depression. Self-anger is literally an anger turned inward, though this in itself, at least at the traumatic level, is merely a byproduct, a habitual, learned response to some type of abusive behavior by another. It is almost invariably seen in victims of abuse, whether psychological, physical, or sexual, and is often coupled with protective or identification tendencies toward the abuser.

Anyone with clinical depression, depression that lingers for more than a few days or is part of a lasting cycle of depression is almost inevitably dealing with a wave of deep-seated anger relating to trauma that affects his or her sense of self. Such cases should be referred to a mental health professional and not dealt with through anger management counseling alone. Those that experience patterns of self-anger that are neither lingering or abusive to self, that is, not involving withdrawal or self-

destructive behavior and rather are more a pattern of "self-blaming" or "assuming responsibility" for negative outcomes (as in the case of an 'enabling' spouse) may not have clinical depression or deep-seated trauma but are undoubtedly struggling with emotional dysfunction and/or identity disorders.

These subjects should also be referred to a mental health professional, as the emotional and psychological make-up is deeply conflicted and could potentially include suicidal or self-abusive tendencies. The incidental anger at self, in the form of self-blaming and agonizing over past decisions or failed choices is, to some extent, a natural part of the learning process. The key is to eliminate any lingering rumination over the choices or outcomes and adopt an assertive program of establishing behavior that promotes self-awareness. The subject cognizes any subconscious beliefs or hidden agendas and assumes a rational and mature outlook on success and failure while encouraging exploration of healthy risk-taking.

The skills and tools for such an undertaking are best discovered through practical trials focused to target and counter the self-defeating behavior as precisely as possible. Journaling, chronicling events and decisions are excellent means to evaluate choices and outcomes. Also, inquiry, in the form of establishing support from trusted intimates, can be valuable to add objectivity and perspective. Albert Ellis' promotion of unconditional acceptance, especially of self, can be invaluable, if the tendency is to wrongly focus blame for failed outcomes on a particular trait that we find unacceptable or unattractive in ourselves, incidental self-anger lacks the levels of emotional rage endemic to the combative or confrontational situations encountered with anger at others.

Incidental self-anger is usually the easiest of all waves of anger to manage, as the sense of self-responsibility is already in place, albeit intensified, which is necessary to establish cognizance of the behavior pattern and taking steps to change it. Anger at Others Almost all treatment and approaches focus on this anger for reasons mentioned earlier. The key to this anger is understanding that it is not a "person," but a "behavior" that is triggering the anger reflex. Thus accepted, the breakdown of behavior begins, as our recognition that it is the power of our own thought that defines the experience, and not the supposed power of another individual.

A most powerful realization for those manifesting anger at others is that letting go of anger does not mean conceding defeat, or identity. It does mean establishing a right sense of self-identity and providing a stronger position from which to pursue and accomplish our goals. Anger at others may at times be a cover for some type of self-anger, particularly when it involves an abdication of our own power to make choices. This may or may not be linked to past failures or situations where the subject has neglected or refused to accept responsibility or may have knowingly or willingly made choices or adopted behavior at conflict with their conscious instinct or desires.

Examples of this would be accepting a position or entering a relationship that is consciously at odds with our moral or emotional self. The resultant discomfort may be directed in anger at the "supposed" cause of the discomfort and efforts

made to override the conscious acknowledgment of responsibility in our complicity. However, it is truly a self-anger arisen from our own intentional effort to act contrary to a choice we made. In its extreme, this anger may alternate between anger vented at others and self-destructive behavior like alcoholism, hedonism or drug abuse. This particular “others vs. self” see-saw is the most common type of anger seen in soldiers and other types of combatants. Unable to determine and accept the legitimate powers exerting influence, and disentangle from consent to power exerted over them, soldiers can develop an emotionally descending spiral of rationalizations and selfloathing.

Anger at God As discussed previously, an individual’s definition of God and particular sense of God determines much when speaking of religion or spirituality. It becomes almost impossible to speak directly to the specifics of anger that usually manifests itself in anger at God. Therefore, in the broadest possible terms, in order to make the necessary generalizations, we will accept here that God is the ultimate power and creator of the Universe. Those who experience anger at God do so usually as the result of one of two things; either a tragic event of seeming cosmic injustice (as in the death of a loved one, especially a child, or a catastrophic loss of another sort), or through a long series of seemingly endless trials and struggles, sometimes referred to as a “Job” experience. (Job was an Old Testament patriarch who endured the loss of family, health, and possessions over a lengthy period of time, testing his faith in God.) In either case, the anger usually requires an “inciting event” to trigger its outward expression, the same as any other anger, and the trigger may or may not have a direct connection or link to God, faith or religion itself. The trigger, the inciting incident, will invariably have a common denominator amongst all cases though, and this is that human abilities failed.

Something, somewhere in the incident moved beyond our ability to influence or change the outcome. We cannot blame ourselves, for we did not cause the mechanical malfunction, introduce the disease or in any way cause the tragedy. We cannot blame ourselves or others, for everyone performed to the best of their abilities where it was humanly possible. The only possible outcome in reasoning at this point is to accept that it was “out of human hands.” What then, who then can be held responsible? Situations where there is no “other” to blame or no “self” to blame, these events inevitably get blamed on God, and God becomes the subject and focus of anger. “If God is almighty all-powerful, and loving, then how could this happen?”

A very famous book written on the subject is When Bad Things Happen to Good People, by Harold S. Kushner. Kushner writes, "What do we do with our anger when we have been hurt? The goal, if we can achieve it, would be to be angry at the situation, rather than at ourselves, or at those who might have prevented it or are close to us trying to help us, or at God who let it happen. Getting angry at ourselves makes us depressed. Being angry at other people scares them away and makes it harder for them to help us. Being angry at God erects a barrier between us and all the sustaining, comforting resources of spirituality that are there to help us at such times.

Being angry at the situation, recognizing it as something rotten, unfair, and totally undeserved, shouting about it, denouncing it, crying over it, permits us to discharge the anger, which is a part of being hurt, without making it harder for us to be helped." Kushner, a Rabbi, is writing from religious perspective and his own personal tragedy. But in applying an anger management overlay to his words leaves us in a dilemma. While he properly directs the anger away from others or self, and reasonably points out that anger at God removes a potential source of comfort and support, he also comes close to undoing this good advice by advocating venting, which has been proven not to "discharge" anger, but rather to escalate and perpetuate it. Les Carter and Frank Minirth in The Anger Workbook, present this analysis of those who insist that "God should have stopped my problems and alleviated my suffering." They are suffering from the "Shining Knight Syndrome," where God becomes a mythical figure who rides in to save the day. Yes, God is all-powerful, but we shouldn't give God the credit or blame for human choices and human happenings.

God set the design, but we are still responsible for our actions and our experience. In other words, God made the heavens and earth, but God didn't create automobiles, per se, and is not responsible for pollution or our irresponsible treatment of the environment. While both of these works have undeniably offered some comfort for many people, they seem somehow flawed and evasive when they first ascribe certain qualities to God, and then rationalize human suffering on the grounds that God is a diffident parent, somehow disinterested in our suffering. This is a hard theological question, and one that inevitably pokes a hole in the otherwise most rational and comforting of religious beliefs. This hole then seems to get plastered over with a big sticker with the words "Faith" or "Divine Will" or some equally indecipherable and inexplicable concept. In Your God Is Too Small author J.B. Phillips, a Christian scholar, translator and theologian asserts that the basic problems of man's ineffective and dissatisfied relationship with God is that his concept of God is, well, too small. Humanity, rather than trying to understand God's true nature, ascribes to Him qualities and identity based on our human perspective. That is, God becomes a "Grand Old Man," the "Managing Director," a "Resident Policeman" or some other super attenuated projection of humankind.

The fact is that God is a Spiritual Identity. However, we simply cannot begin to understand or effectively pray to a being that is nothing more than a "superhuman" any more than we can if we insist He is an "unknowable mystery." If we return to our analogy of the math problem, as used in the "Religious Based Methods" section, Anger at God is akin to the child being angry at the teacher when he fails to correctly solve the math problem, or to grasp the principles of its operation. If there were no adversity or "wrong answers," we would never could review our operations and learn a greater truth. One Eastern philosophy teaching uses the oyster and the pearl to illustrate a point. The irritant, a grain of sand, becomes the opportunity whereby the pearl, a thing of great beauty, is created. In Western religion, such gathering of wisdom is often called, "the pearl of great price." The price of acquisition was great, but its end worth is beyond measure. Unfortunately, there is no way to address an anger management issue with God

without encountering some sticky situations where faith and religious beliefs are involved. Kushner makes a point that we tend to believe, especially on an unconscious level, that "we are the cause of what happens" and our belief is one short step to" believing that every disaster is our fault."

In the face of tragedy, we have a legitimate need to believe that things have an order and purpose to them. A belief in God can provide that sense of order and purpose, and at the same time help us to relieve ourselves of unnecessary and irrational guilt and responsibility. However, if we are to accept a belief in God, in a higher, infinite, and universal power, then we must also have the humility to admit that this grand architect does not need to make us privy to His ways. It is, in the Torah, the Bible and the Quran, emphatically noted that it is our responsibility to seek God, and in seeking the understanding of our place in His purpose, we are provided with the knowledge, wisdom and insight to continue our journey. Like the child at the blackboard, we can't expect the problem solving will necessarily be easy, though we can rely on the fact that the solution does exist.

Anger at the World Anger at the world takes on a noticeably less dramatic dimension but has certain similarities to anger at God. In both cases it is a sense of powerlessness and incomprehension that confounds our ability to reason or act in an effective manner. As with all anger, the best solution for anger at the world is knowledge. As self-knowledge, the dismissal of beliefs that are nothing more than a prejudiced pattern of thinking, help eradicate anger at others and self. Knowledge also defeats anger at the world. Different cultures, different societies, different religions, and customs may confound and confuse us, but that does not mean we have to remain in paralytic fear or ignorance.

Being widely read and properly informed may mean taking time out from television news and sound bytes, or spending a little time researching the background, ownership, and agenda of particular news sources to ensure that you are not unconsciously ingesting opinions in the name of fact. Gone are the days when we could trust everything in print. Look to magazines like, "The Week," that offer a compilation of many opposing points of view and differing opinions to help gain a balanced view. Subjects struggling with this issue might intentionally and consciously look to news sources that are specifically known to stand politically, religiously or philosophically at the opposite end of their own beliefs in order to ensure a balance and develop a tolerance for opposing opinions. As "active listening" can be a valuable tool to develop in conversation, "active reading" can be employed. The subject consciously and emphatically reads to discern the factual communication being delivered without becoming emotionally involved in theoretical opposition. This practice can eventually lead to the practice of "standing in someone else's shoes." One can cultivate acquaintances and even friendships with a diverse group of people through attending library events or free community, university or public lectures and symposiums.

It must be cautioned, however, that until a degree of tolerance and equanimity can be maintained, one should avoid those events liable to evoke an anger reflex. Closer to home, one may find "the world" within their own changing

community. What was once a gentrified neighborhood may, in such a changing economic and sociological climate, have shifted and expanded to include more diversity. Volunteering at various community events, schools or charitable organizations can help expose us to views and perspectives that dissolve ignorance In the case of world anger, ignorance is usually what leads to fear, which precipitates the anger reflex.

One means of cultivating a more expansive tolerance within ourselves is to look at previously emotionally charged issues that hold no current triggers for us. Books such as "Black like Me" which is an account of the segregated black experience pre-civil rights, or David Copperfield which documents the plight of the poor in Industrial England can be extremely valuable. Both these, and similar books, dealt with highly charged cultural issues of the day. By reading intelligently, and actively seeking alternative historical perspectives, we can begin to assimilate the ability to discern and displace emotional discoloration of information. This way we can overcome ignorant fears and produce thoughtful conclusions.

One additional point here is that we should be aware of "legitimate powers" which can and do have authority and control over us. But we should remind ourselves that this authority and control is limited in scope and action, and certainly never has the power to assert itself on our rational thinking processes, even if it does control our social and cultural environment.

***Terrorism**: Terrorism occupies a central place in today's social and political discourse. Fear and anger related to terrorism are present to at least some degree in every citizen of the world because of its shockingly bold and unprecedented entrance into everyday life, into places we considered "safe." These places may be schools, supermarkets, banks, or places of business, as "terrorism" is not confined to inter-faith, inter-racial or international settings. It is anywhere that anger becomes a violent and lethal urge to impress and impose itself upon others. If its purpose is to inspire "terror" for whatever reason, be it political, religious fanaticism or the results of an unfathomably disturbed reasoning without any seeming motivation, then school shootings, random drive-by shootings, workplace hostages, employee rages and all such acts can reasonably be agreed upon as terrorism.*

Every unfocused anger-rage inflicted on others is rightly classified under the definition of terrorism, and it is these broader, violent, and potentially lethal acts that we address here. In perfect irony, such acts of terrorism are the only legitimate situation in which our own anger reflex is meant to operate: a classic "fight-or-flight" scenario in which our very lives are at risk. Nonetheless, the primal reflex is of little use in the normal course of our lives and even this "appropriate" scenario must be managed lest we fail to control our own anger and fall prey to the resulting physical or mental distress of our actions. Despite the plethora of media currently addressing terrorism, there is arguably only one widely available writing specifically addressing terrorism within and of the realm of anger management; it is the Anger Management Sourcebook, by Glenn R. Schiraldi, Ph.D. and Melissa Hallmark Kerr, Ph.D. Below are a few pointers from the book:

1. Accept the full range of feelings as normal. At an appropriate point allow yourself to feel, shake, cry or whatever naturally occurs. The key here is neither to suppress nor indulge. There is as much danger to "fantasizing" supposed scenarios of feelings and emotions as there is to ignore or repressing them. Such fantasizing is akin to "venting" which invariably only increases the anger. Often, as group pathos or hysteria becomes a self-stimulating event, a wise course is to use "journalizing," the technique of writing your thoughts and feelings or talking them into a tape recorder. This kind of "…journalizing/talking has been found to significantly improve mood and physical health, following an initial drop in mood as we confront the reality of what has happened." Post-traumatic stress is much higher for those who don't acknowledge or express their feelings. Even if there is emotional distancing and shock, this too should be recorded and tracked, as it will eventually encourage the inevitable imprints to express themselves naturally.

2. Keep what has happened in perspective. Acts of terror are not personal. They are general and ideological. The vast majority of people in the world do not and would not commit such acts. It is important to recognize and affirm that despite genuine horror, our country or our community is intact. Keep in mind that despite whatever terrible losses, terrorism inevitably fails to cause widespread or extensive damage. Its only real power as a weapon is emotional, and we must not give it that power. Our ideals are stronger than fanaticism, and we must hold an image of Love and Decency that is greater than any evil. There is undoubtedly health and solace in a spiritual perspective that there can be no eternal defeat to Good.

3. Keep a calm resolve, focusing on what you individually want to do. The action of helping others is beneficial, whether that action is giving blood, donating money, food, counsel, prayer or other acts of kindness.

4. Guard your physical health, especially if the distress becomes prolonged. Exert structure in your daily life through exercise, scheduling, stress management or whatever it takes to make yourself comfortable.

5. Avoid thoughts that excessively arouse the nervous system. Avoid situations that excessively stimulate emotional agitation. This includes "catastrophizing," using "should," "musts," "horrible," "awful," etc… as well as "all or nothing," as in, "I'm either strong or I'm weak."

6. Be aware of your physical condition. Specifically, watch for subtle alterations in your breathing that might indicate unconscious tension and stress asserting itself.

7. Strengthen your faith in anything that reminds you of the "Big Picture," of a larger order and meaning than the present crisis.

8. When the crisis has passed…grieve. When occupied with survival we tend to forget something has been lost in a traumatic fashion. Once the "emergency" situation is over and we are safe, we should allow ourselves to feel the loss and release it. Rituals, symbols, and farewells often help this process.

9. Do not allow yourself to be consumed by hatred. We must keep ourselves separate and apart from those who committed the act itself, keep ourselves

conscious of who we are, and why we exist, and not sink to the depths of the terrorists themselves. Whatever steps or measures we take should be without hatred and should consciously be for the promotion of love and healing.

10. Anticipate future occurrences of terrorism by being prepared, not obsessed. If storing a stockpile of food makes you feel more comfortable, then do it. If planning for your family's safety gives you peace of mind, then do it. Once done, let it go.

11. Cultivate the attributes of resilient survivors, those who have faced and coped with such experiences as World War II veterans, abuse survivors, terrorist victims and, the like. Successful survivors have displayed the qualities like "…reasoned optimism, self-esteem, flexibility, creative problem solving, altruism, a sense of beauty, sense of humor and balanced living."

In short, they've learned to appreciate life. To cultivate a sense of beauty, take up bird watching, painting, art appreciation or something that causes you to consciously acknowledge and appreciate beauty in new ways. Cultivate altruism by volunteering your time, sponsoring a child, or helping the homeless.

12. Express physical and verbal affection to family and friends. This provides reassurance and a sense of security both to you and them. Adults and especially children should not be exposed to repeated or prolonged media messages or images of terrorism. Discuss it with them. Ask their ideas and input. Encourage positive inclusion by asking what they would do to help and other such problem-solving questions that stimulate growth and thinking beyond the tragedy or terror of the event.

13. If symptoms of stress, anger, fear and the like do not resolve in a few weeks…if normal, daily living is impaired by thoughts and emotions, this is post-traumatic stress disorder. There is a growing awareness of these problems and new treatments and approaches are quite helpful in the professional mental health field.

14. Failure to deal with the event only lowers one's threshold for facing and overcoming future events. And finally, from a study of World War II survivors, here is a compilation of qualities, attitudes and outlook that were common to all who were successfully free of lasting effects from trauma from the war. The best of them conveyed the following: They did their duty without animosity. They were people of faith, decency and high moral character. They maintained a sense of humor and hope. They acknowledged fears, and then acted anyway.

Why So Much Anger?

There seems to be several truisms about anger and anger management. Destructive anger like toxic anger, chronic anger, and rage, have alarmingly increased as a personal and societal problem. While there are differences in thought, both subtle and significant, about anger and anger management, certain consistencies in trends of thought tend to prevail according to collective consciousness. Whatever the collective human consciousness accepts as being true and possible tends to become accepted as true and possible. The first item literally begs the question, "Why?" Why is anger so prevalent? Shouldn't we realize that a

societal problem exists which must be treated? If everyone in a neighborhood came down with the same illness, wouldn't there be some effort to discover the source of the illness and a cure instead of merely treating symptoms? If a very real problem, one that has caused countless tragedies and spawned an entire industry, can continue to be treated at the "symptom" level only, then there is no prayer for a cure. Look at a sampling of headlines taken from the internet headline news services: "54-year-old grandmother attacks policeman over speeding ticket," "Man shoots fast food worker after botched order," "Wife stabs husband after he criticizes her cooking," "Child shoots playmate who refuses to trade Pokemon card." These are neither the worst nor a complete list. But the incidents are frequent enough to be reported regularly in the media. What can possibly have pushed society to this precipice, committing terrible acts in the heat of the moment? This is anger at its worst. A compelling argument can be made for looking at the things that lead to anger. Fear and stress are the top two factors cited by every authority on the subject of anger.

Somehow our society has become so stressful and fearful that the anger threshold has become alarmingly low, and stress levels so high that people explode. Sixty-hour work weeks, less job security, television and media violence, lack of money and even angry music can be cited as causes for high stress. We need to look at not only what we have accepted and agreed to in terms of individual stress, pressures and fears, but also to look at what kind of a society we have created and to which we have subscribed. As indicated in Section II, History of Anger, great world changes have resulted from individuals taking a creative stand against oppression. The oppression may be political, corporate, religious, economic, geographical, etc., but it must be opposed by the masses if we are to take a stand against it and make any noticeable change. As a society we have come to believe less in true justice and fair dealings from our government, leaders, and the world in general, just as we have accepted a certain level of victimization from those entities.

On the conscious and unconscious levels of thinking, we accept that wrongs have been, and are, committed, and that we are powerless against them. We have accepted that the logical outcome is that we have - and are - victimized. There is societal premise that there is a little man who is powerless in the face of evil, corrupt forces. These forces are a faceless "they," a hidden elite, the collective rich who "have" everything.

However, in the purest metaphysical sense, this notion is illogical and faulty. It depersonalizes the enemy with the same tactics of any slick propaganda piece. This thinking soon becomes anger and rage at the non-specific faceless enemies that are controlling and manipulating our lives. Eventually, that stress becomes a hidden rage that suddenly explodes when it is given a random "face," like a driver sliding into your intended parking space, a server mixing up your order at a restaurant, or some other incident that doesn't warrant the amount of rage that is expressed.

A Metaphysical Approach to Anger

Besides contemplating the big picture of humankind's place in the Universe, "metaphysical" means to be "beyond the physical." To some degree a metaphysician is denying the physical and material laws as we know them. As a point of philosophical argument, an absolute metaphysician would discount every physical, behavioral and cognizant theory put forth herein. As practicing metaphysicians we seek to heal beliefs not based on material or physical theories, but rather a premise of the unity of indivisible good. Metaphysicians, healers, medical physicians and professional mental health counselors have now adopted the outlook that some aspects of faith and spirituality greatly aid in recovery and general well-being. It is prudent to look at what exactly our beliefs are. If we subscribe to the metaphysical outlook that the Creator, the Universe, God, Mind, Goddess, is All Good, then the error of thought is obvious. There can be no bad, negative, or evil outcome because none can exist. As we pray, meditate, and believe this truth, we continue to be baffled when terrible things happen. If we subscribe to the metaphysical outlook that the Creator, the Universe, God, Mind, Goddess, is Neutral, then the ideology of good/bad and positive/negative still lies in our thoughts and perceptions.

If we find that we are holding to a "Good and Evil" concept of Life, Creation, and the Universe, then we are not truly practicing metaphysicians, but rather an upbeat, pop version of the old school concepts. By accepting this premise, we have defaulted our outlook to a never-ending battle of infinity in which man is but an unwitting pawn. This has been preached for hundreds of years in both secular and non-secular forums and is the very thing from which metaphysics can set us free.

Herein lies the challenge. While everyone would desire freedom, not all are willing to pay the price. Humility and the relinquishment of ego are pre-requisite for metaphysical healing. That is truly what anger management requires. The angry patient in a life of disarray is anxious to have peace and harmony restored. However, one must be truly ready to give up the false sense of self and others, or the cherished opinions by which one identifies oneself. The anger management practitioner must always keep in mind that what is being asked of the patient is to relinquish the sense of self much the way the Buddhist does. Though at first glance this seems extreme, consider the problem and the methods of the solution. It means that a habitual pattern of behavior and thinking that was introduced for self-preservation as a survival skill must be released. It makes no difference that those patterns of thinking and behavior no longer function, or that they were faulty to begin with.

By examining what is calm, rational and true, what is untrue will be uncovered. It is important to introduce a truer thinking to which one may retreat when the emotions threaten to overwhelm. A famous metaphor: "Digging for dirt will yield dirt, and occasionally water; digging for water will let you cast aside the dirt and yield the well." A metaphysical healer must always reinforce a true concept of self and others as part of the Oneness of Being. Though many may initially be looking only for a reprieve of symptoms, there is the choice of "managing symptoms" or true healing.

True healing involves a change of thought, a change of outlook and perception. To use a crude example, the repairman who is hired to eliminate the sputter of the car engine will never succeed by treating the sputter. He must look beyond the symptom to the cause. The ultimate cause of irrational anger is a false sense of self as a victim of some power, person, place or circumstance instead of as a free expression of the Ultimate Love of the Creative Universe. This is the first step toward a more expansive consciousness of self in relation to the whole. Once the conscious mind is in play, great steps can be made, and quickly. Whether expressed or not, every being has an innate desire to become aware of the harmony of true being. "Anger Management" is only a step on the journey to where we evolve beyond the causal basis of thought and action into a consciousness of one cause and one effect. Anger management skills are designed to "shortcircuit" the unconscious reactions by imposing a conscious act. This is the work of a lifetime, though, and even successful graduates of anger management training methods may find themselves "hitting a wall" at some time in the future.

A metaphysical counselor must maintain the utmost humility. We must see ourselves in others and see all mankind as brothers and sisters of the same Oneness. If we are asked for and lend a helping hand to those lost in confusion or misery, we can be grateful for the opportunity to reflect the same unconditional love and selflessness that we also need and deserve at times. We should be wary of the temptations to become a guru or savior rather than a healer.

The metaphysical counselor must always be working to "be unemployed," and be so efficiently successful in this healing work that no false dependencies develop, and that others realize their absolute wholeness and complete self-government. Methods No "one size fits all" applies here. Everything that advertises itself as such fails to fit anyone correctly. Too big here, too small there. Ungainly. Unattractive. Rarely useful at all…unless one is stark naked in a storm with nothing else to wear. Again, here the practitioner must take care. All will find a certain sense of individual style and comfort with certain methods. While this may work a percentage of the time, or even be successful most of the time, the highest sense of practice will demand that we look to what is best for the client/patient. Not all people are auditory learners. Not all people are verbal. Some are verbal-visual. Others are, well, other combinations of something else. Though most people can comfortably work well outside of a preferred method of learning, we must remember that those who come to us already experience a block of some sort, and may not be able to work within a proscribed method of counseling. The best recipes are from the best chefs, who maintain a full complement of tools at their disposal.

Exercises: Getting to Know Our Own Anger

While aggression and unfocused anger are never good, there can be many positive things about anger. Both the counselor and client must be clear that it isn't anger that is bad, or unhealthy. It is the unexpressed or unfocused and errant expression of anger that causes pain and suffering, emotional, physical, and psychological. Begin by asking yourself the following questions as a sort of test to understand your own relationship with anger.

1. Are you intimidated by the anger of others?

2. Do you feel guilty when you express your anger?

3. Does expressing your anger ever give you an emotional and physical "rush?"

4. Are you afraid that if you let your anger out you might hurt someone?

5. Have you ever hurt anyone when you expressed your anger? Whom, and how?

6. Do you ever have fantasies of revenge? Are they violent or merely intellectual displays of superiority?

7. Do you find yourself often in conflict with others (or with yourself) over how to do things, or what to do?

8. Do you feel loved, protected, safe and supported by family or friends?

9. Do you think being angry is "wrong?"

10. Are you ever afraid or uncomfortable about situations or events that you can't control or aren't in charge of? You are encouraged to answer the questions thoroughly and to think deeply about them.

This exercise will help you to begin to understand your own relationship to anger, so it is important to be honest with yourself. If, for instance, you answer that you are not intimidated by the anger of others but find yourself "swallowing" anger in the face of rude retail clerks or a family member's cutting remarks, then think deeper about the question. Compare your answers against things that you know make you angry or frustrated and begin to disassemble what you "know" about yourself from how you respond to situations.

Once you have re-addressed the questions, move on to the next set, following the same premise of honest self-evaluation.

1. What situations do you feel powerless over or victimized from?

2. Which people are you around, either occasionally or regularly, that make you uncomfortable, frustrated, or angry?

3. What kind of activities or situations are you aware of making you uptight and tense?

4. When was the last time a spouse, partner or loved one is told you that they were angry with you? How did you respond?

5. When is the last time you told a spouse, partner or loved one that you were angry with them? What was the issue? How did you present it? What was their response?

6. Choose one physical location where you always feel safe, calm, and relaxed. (Or, when you are stressed, upset or angry, what one place could you go that would have an immediate calming effect.) What are the qualities or components of this place?

7. If you could change just one thing about your spouse, partner or an intimate friend, what would it be?

8. Write down the following categories: seat belts; sex education, abortion, gay marriage, stem cell research, women's rights, affirmative action, gun control and mandatory testing for schools and children. What issues do you think the government has a right to dictate and regulate, and why? Which issues do you feel they do not have a right to regulate and dictate, and why? By applying the same criteria to both categories, are you consistent in your beliefs and arguments? (For instance; "I support the enforced use of seat belts." vs. "I do not believe in teaching safe sex and distributing birth control in schools." may be contradictory if the justification for supporting seat belts is that it saves lives, lowers insurance rates or forces people to act in a safe, responsible manner.)

9. Answer the following: "The one thing I would change about myself, is..." "The reason I have not changed this yet, is..."After answering the questions, go back and review your answers with an eye toward anger management. If you have situations where you feel powerless, are they situations of "legitimate power?" If you don't ever feel powerless, are you perhaps suppressing anger over certain frustrations? If your spouse or partner hasn't told you that you've made them angry, and you can bet you have, then there are probably levels of anger expression that need to be developed. Use this kind of "self-analysis" to find out where and how you relate to anger, what you might do to improve your anger expression and potentially what irrational beliefs you allow to influence your thinking.

This kind of exercise can be invaluable in helping yourself, but also in establishing an empathy with those who find themselves in anger management counseling. Many of these questions are not ones we ask ourselves frequently or think deeply about, but they always yield surprising opportunities for reflection and bettering our own emotional health.

Affirmations

As anger has often become a "bad" or dangerous thing to many people, the following are affirmations of a sort that help to break our unconscious agreement to participate in negative anger, while allowing ourselves the opportunity and responsibility to use anger constructively.

- *In a quiet room or some other peaceful setting, find a comfortable position, possibly lying on your back or in a meditative lotus position, and allow yourself to drift.*
- *Begin to monitor yourself for tension, turmoil and conflict in your body and thought. When the "clutter" of everyday has cleared, use these affirmations either by repeating them out loud, or listening to a pre-recording of your own voice.*
- *Anger is an emotion, and emotions are okay.*
- *Anger does not have to lead to aggression or attack.*
- *Anger does not have to hurt anyone.*
- *Anger is energy that can be used for positive change.*

- *Anger is an opportunity to challenge my own beliefs and to grow.*
- *Even those who do not require "anger management counseling" can benefit by becoming more conscious and aware of their own anger expression.*

Suggested Writing Exercise for Yourself: What is your favorite anger management approach from this course, and why?

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An Approach to Spiritual Growth
By Saiyra Akbar and Shahir A. A

Introduction

"The teaching's voice is total silence, amid the ringing wind chimes." Zen Master Hengzhi

"Researchers speculate that primitive hunter-gather societies may have discovered meditation and its altered states of consciousness, while starting at the flames of their fires. Over thousands of years, meditation evolved into a structured practice. Indian scriptures called "tantras" mentioned meditation techniques 5000 years ago." https://iml.jou.ufl.edu/projects/spring05/Luft/history.htm

In this course I will discuss how meditation is the vehicle through which one can attain inner calm and awakened spiritual consciousness, leading one to transform their life into a more creative, abundant, and joyful state. The main objective of meditation is to bring about an awakened spiritual consciousness, enabling one to live with higher awareness and creative expression. Through meditation, we can find our most inner center so that we can find the source of peace in our outer world. In our awakened spiritual state, we begin to know ourselves better, therefore we can make better choices and solve our problems rationally. At the same time, our connection with God, the Divine Being is re-established, leading to improved functionalities and intelligence, and spiritual awareness.

Meditation has been practiced since time unknown. Inner calm and peace expand the concept of knowing ourselves and the universe we live in. Coming close to God and knowing we have been the secret desire of all humans. A vital aspect of meditation is stilling the mind, the thoughts, and this can be done by the simple act of becoming aware of the breath. There are several ways to get to our inner self but the most important is through becoming aware of the breath. The breathing process directly affects our state of mind and the thought process and thus our psychological being. By controlling the breath, we can control our thoughts. Larry Rosenberg says in his book, 'Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation', that, "The simple vehicle of the breath takes the practitioner from calming the mind all the way to the deepest wisdom, to nirvana."

All religions, philosophies, and cultures have been practicing Meditation in one form or another. Throughout history, humans have practiced meditation to attain peace and relaxation and to find a more meaningful life by connecting to God. There are many types of meditation techniques and practices that can help one to become spiritually awakened and enhance the meditative experience. Visualizations, chanting, music, crystals, aromas, and even the act of simple prayer can be used to attain meditative states.

Finally, the benefits of meditation are limitless. Research has shown that health is improved physically, mentally, and emotionally. One can live life with more awareness and clarity along with an inner satisfaction that brings the joy of being alive and well.

Review of Literature

I will begin by listing the books that I have used in writing this paper. A book that bought a different aspect of meditation to me, is written by Thich Nhat Hanh and Nguyen Anh Huong, and the book is called "Walking Meditation". This book gives guided meditations on how to practice meditation in your daily life. It put focus on moving meditation and how to incorporate it into our daily lives. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese peace activist, teacher, and Zen master who has written many books on meditation, attaining, and living in peace with the world around us. He is also a great spiritual leader of our time and the founder of the Order of Interbeing. Thich Nhat Hanh has also been nominated for the Nobel Prize by Martin Luther King Jr. Nguyen Anh Huong is one of his prized students, also a teacher of Mindfulness Meditation Techniques and has been teaching in the US since 1988. Together they have written "Walking Meditation". In this book, they explain how the simple act of walking can create a peaceful state of being. It goes on to explain how by being mindful of every step we take, we can connect to the earth and begin to feel joy in every step, we can smell the flowers, trees, and nature around with more clarity. Thich Nhat Hanh goes on to emphasize that meditation can be done by performing our daily chores, by walking and even jogging. Walking Meditation

begins with breathing mindfully and becoming aware of the breath and controlling it to silence the mind

Another great book is "Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation", by Larry Rosenberg with David Guy. Larry Rosenberg is a teacher of Buddhism and owns the Cambridge Insight Meditation Center, Cambridge Massachusetts. He has a Ph.D. in Social Psychology and has also trained in the Japanese Philosophy of Zen; His book "Breath by Breath" teaches meditation through Buddha's teachings and the sacred text the 'Anapanasati Sutra'. It relays the necessary instructions to begin meditating and gradually we are guided to a deeper understanding of meditation and the universe around us. It is a lifetime commitment as we grow and evolve breath by breath and our thinking is transformed and refined, as well as our hearts and our life. In this book, he explains how the Anapanasati Sutra is divided into 16 contemplations and then further stacked in four sets of four contemplation. The first set gives instructions on conscious breathing. The second set of contemplation focuses on our emotional state. The third concentrates on our mental state, and the last set focuses on the impermanence of things and letting go and finally reach a state of enlightenment.

Another fountain of knowledge is from Roy Eugene Davis, "A Master Guide to Meditation and Spiritual Growth", and his "Easy Guide to Meditation". Both books are beautifully written and explain the various dimensions of Meditation beautifully. The true purpose of why people meditate is discussed at length. Roy Eugene Davis is a well-known Spiritual Teacher and studied under Paramahansa Yogananda in 1949. He was ordained by him in 1949, and as Minister, he joined The Self-Realization Fellowship Center in Phoenix, Arizona teaching Kriya Yoga. In 1972 he opened a Spiritual Awareness Center in Georgia. He has written many books on spirituality and meditation. Along with that, he has published many articles in the Truth Journal Magazine. The book "A Master Guide to Meditation", his guide on the growth of consciousness and spirituality. The goal of the book is to remember our divine nature and connection with the Infinite (God), and that we reside in God always. Through Meditation one can connect to God and thus divine consciousness, which brings us to a deeper inner satisfaction and spiritual growth.

"An Easy Guide to Meditation", by Roy Eugene Davis is a beginner level book and explains concepts of how meditation can help attain spiritual growth in its various stages. He says in the book, "You need to know you are a spiritual being so that you can do helpful things to allow your innate qualities to unfold and express." He goes on to explain that deep within our core we are units of divine consciousness and this fact can help us transform our lives to make better choices and decisions. Another amazing resource is by Lawrence Leshan called, "A Guide to Self-Discovery: How to Meditate". Lawrence Leshan talks about why people meditate and how to explore the different ways to meditate. He goes on to explain how meditation is the journey of meditation and spiritual growth, which helps us evolve as humans. He further states that cultures and traditions from around the world have shown common outcomes of improved functionalities and a better understanding of one's reality. Lawrence Leshan was a psychotherapist and a meditation expert. He has a Ph.D. in Human Development and has done extensive research work in

parapsychology and the paranormal. Along with that, he has written many articles and books on meditation, mysticism, and paranormal concepts.

Another amazing book is by Starhawk, "The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Goddess". Starhawk holds a BA in Fine Arts and a Masters in Psychology. She is an ecofeminist, a witch, and active in the Neopagan belief system. Her book, "The Spiral Dance" talks about the Wiccan and Goddess religion, and how the male and female energies keep the world and creation in balance. She talks about how the divine consciousness is within us and is the source of our most sacred wisdom and creative expression. In the book "The Spiral Dance" Starhawk says that, "The Deep Self is the Divine within, the ultimate essence, the spirit that exists beyond time, space and matter. It is our deepest level of wisdom and compassion and is conceived of as both male and female, two motes of consciousness united. It is often symbolized as two linked spirals, or as the infinity sign, the 8 on its side." Starhawk gives detailed meditation practices, with chants and visualizations that help one to connect to divine consciousness.

Another book that truly inspired me is "The Power of Breath: The Art of Breathing Well for Harmony, Happiness and Health", by Swami Saradananda. Swami Saradananda was born in a Brahmin family and was a deeply religious man. He loved to help the poor, sick, and destitute. He became spiritual and studied under Ramakrishna and became his disciple in spiritual practices. He wrote many articles and joined the Ramakrishna Mission. In his book "The Power of Breath" he explains the breathing process and its science. He says that breath is in everything we do, breath is in our thoughts, our emotions, and every action. Our bodily functions thrive on breath. Swami Saradananda instructs on various breathing exercises to rejuvenate our body, mental and emotional being, and to utilize the breath energy more efficiently.

Another great resource is written by Dr. Joseph Murphy's "Believe in Yourself". His book teaches how we can all connect to our divinity within and become whole and reclaim our power back. It talks about using imagination (visualization) to create a better life for ourselves. Dr. Joseph Murphy further explains in his book that "God's presence and power is within you. This knowledge or Awareness of Divinity within you is the greatest and most powerful contributing factor to success." Dr. Joseph Murphy was a scholar of Divine Sciences, a poet, and a mystic. He became a Minister and helped the New Thought Movement. This movement was established by a group of people who believed that our everyday life could be improved by what we believe and imagine it to be. They taught a new way to look at life, which found their source from metaphysical, religious, and spiritual concepts. Dr. Joseph Murphy also started his own Ministry and named it "The Church of Divine Science".

Another great book is Mindfulness Meditation Guide for Beginners: How to

Relieve Stress through Meditation and Cultivate Ultimate Wellness for Life", by Tencia Revona. This book is a simple guide to Mindfulness Meditation. Tencia Revona explains how mindfulness in meditation gives you wisdom that gives you peace in every thought and action. You become one with that moment. In our fast-paced life mindfulness meditation gives us a chance to slow down and become aware of

ourselves and what we are doing. This way we can be at peace and with an inner knowing see things differently. It helps reduce anxiety and stress and live-in awareness. Tencia Revona says in the book, "...mindfulness is all about and choosing to be present in their lives rather than simply letting life pass them by." Tencia Revona is a spiritual teacher, healer, and writer.

Another resource that I found inspiring is: The Yoga of Breath: A Step-by-Step Guide to Pranayama" by Richard Rosen, who is a teacher of Iyengar Yoga and is the Assistant Director of the Yoga Research and Education Center in California. He is also editor of the Yoga Journal. In the book "The Yoga of Breath" Richard talks about his experience in pranayama and how it has transformed his life for the better. Pranayama exercises have enabled him to see visions and a deeper wisdom and understanding of life. He goes on to explain that he has divided pranayama science into four parts, and each part brings a different experience and fulfillment. He reveals yoga as a limitless potential of spirituality.

Personal Relevance

Personally, I have been doing some meditation to calm the senses and to rejuvenate the
body. The following is a breathing method that I found beneficial for releasing emotional & mental
thoughts and detoxification.

- *Sit in the lotus position or lie straight in a comfortable position.*
- *Begin by taking a few deep breaths.*
- *Now inhale by breathing in from the abdomen and count to four breaths and,*
- *Hold for sixteen counts (multiply by four the number of breaths taken).*
- *Then slowly let out your breath in eight counts (half the held breaths and double the number of breaths taken).*
- *Repeat five times.*
- *Increase or decrease as desired.*

I found that even 10 minutes of this meditation three times per week is beneficial for overall
health. It can be enhanced by holding of crystals such amethyst and rose quartz, or only plain quartz
crystal. Another meditation that I have used is with visualization of white light. The best way to protect yourself from negative energy is with a light meditation. The following is one technique to do a simple meditation.

White Light Meditation.

- *Sit, or lay on the floor and close your eyes.*
- *Imagine white light warming and engulfing first, the Crown of your head, and bathing your eyes in light. Let the white light warm your mind and relax and release all thoughts.*
- *Move the white light down and around the body and let each part be filled with white light.*
- *Allow the white light to massage each part of your body and around it like a halo.*
- *Finish at the root chakra but let the white light move down your legs and feet.*
- *Then allow the white light to engulf your entire being.*
- *This protects your aura from negative energies and allows your "psychic defense" to come into play.*

This meditation technique can be used with crystals also, especial quartz crystal to enhance overall health and to increase positive energy.

History of Meditation

All cultures and religions have been practicing meditation for centuries. Connecting with the Divine God, a Higher Power, the Great Spirit, etc., has been an important part of humanity's beginnings and evolution. Every culture religion and civilization has practiced meditation in its many forms. They have used meditation to attain a serene state and connect to nature and God. It is every human's innate desire to get away from everyday problems and workings of our fast-paced life.
Extensive research has shown that meditation was first found in the Eastern Worlds, such as the Indian sub-continent. The Vedas is found to have numerous accounts of meditations to bring awareness to God. Later, knowledge of other spiritual practices such as yoga was discovered.
China and Japan brought forth various new ways of connecting to God, from these teachings stemmed from the various Buddhist branches of spiritual practices that put much emphasis on meditation as the key to divine consciousness.

The website www.project-meditation.org/mankinds-oldest-getaway/ states that,

"The ancient Vedas of India were the first to document meditation, about 1,500 BCE. At the same time, other forms of meditation developed in China, and only slightly later, in Japan. Meditation gained ground as a Buddhist spiritual practice between 500-600 BCE, with the first meditation hall opening in Japan in 653 BCE. The Bhagavad Gita, an epic poem that describes the philosophy of yoga, meditation, and spirituality, was written around 400 BCE. By 20BCE, spiritual exercises involving mindfulness had spread to the west and were documented in early Greek Texts, but the practice was not embraced by early Christianity although prayer and meditation share remarkable similarities. Throughout most of history, though, meditation was considered a spiritual practice that was the realm of monks, priests, other religious figures, and a few intellectuals, and was largely? unknown among the general population."

In antiquity, meditation was practiced by only those who chose to follow a certain, strict, hermetic way of life. These few select people would devote themselves to God, following a spiritual, religious way of life, and at the same time denying themselves the materialistic luxuries, to become one with God. They were known as mystics, enlightened beings, awakened, Sufis, Buddhists, etc.

Eventually, as time went by, the world grew, and its' knowledge spread. With the advancement of technology, meditation became more widespread. In the advent of the 20th century, meditation began to be practiced across nations. By the mid-20th-century various meditation techniques began to surface in the western part of the world. These meditations focused on relaxation and self-transformation by attaining inner calm. The website www.project-meditation.org/mankinds-oldest-getaway/states that,

"In the west meditation has always been a largely secular practice. Its modern emphasis is primarily on self-improvement, and self-reduction-but it still did not gain widespread popularity until the 1990s, when Deepak Chopra became a household name among those interested in personal development. Jon Kaba-Zinn, founded the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program at the University of Massachusetts in 1979 to help treat patients with chronic illnesses-and since then, Meditation has been widely studied and increasingly applied for its therapeutic effects. "

All meditation has their source in religious or spiritual concepts that initiates the

development of the personality and character, which further develops the soul. This practice leads to the expansion of consciousness and mind, which aids in getting spiritual truths. Prayers, contemplations, divine readings, and devotional worship all lead to connection with the divine.

Researchers in meditation have found that meditation was practiced in ancient civilizations, one common practice was found in the form of reciting chants in a repetitive, rhythmic way. The repetitive chants put focus on reciting one thing, which assists in freeing the mind from the constant chatter and thus enabling it to stillness, where union with the divine is made possible.

What is Meditation

Meditation comes from the Latin word meditatum, which means to contemplate, think on. Many philosophers and thinkers, throughout history, termed meditation as a spiritual practice, or an exercise to control the mind and psyche. The goal of meditation is to find our true self in connection with divine consciousness and with everything around us. Lawrence Le Shan states in his book, "How to Meditate: A Guide to Self-Discovery" that,

"We meditate to find, to recover to come back to something of ourselves we once dimly and unknowingly had and have lost without knowing what it was or where or when we lost it."

We all strive to better ourselves, to live life to our fullest potential, and to find peace and satisfaction in whatever we do. Meditation leads to an awakened spiritual state. It is a spiritual exercise to control the mind and psyche for gaining a serene state. By being calm and peaceful and confident we can connect with our divine self, universal consciousness, and live life with creative expression. The true purpose of meditation is to 'Know Thyself' and what it means to be alive in a physical form and at the same time being connected to sour spirituality and soul. This is a journey to discover what it means to be a human being. But this journey of self-discovery and self-transformation only begins when one is ready. Jon Kabat-Zinn states in his book "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life", that,

“Many paths can lead to understanding and wisdom. Each of us has different needs to address and

things worth pursuing over the course of a lifetime. Each of us must chart our own course, and it has
to fit what we are ready for meditation. You have to come to it at the right time in your life, at a point where you are ready to listen carefully to your own voice, to your own heart, to your own breathing-to just be present for them and with them, without having to go anywhere or make anything better or different.”

We meditate to realize our connection with God, Divine Consciousness, whatever we
choose to call it. God is divine consciousness, and his consciousness is limitless and infinite,
connecting to this consciousness brings us to our higher self and inspires us to live with the highest
potential of our being and divinity. Ours souls long to discover our higher and truest potential and this can be done by the process of meditation, which connects with divine consciousness. Implementing a process of meditation in our lives we begin, to experience different levels of spiritual growth, which help us to evolve as humans also. Roy Eugene Davis talks about the different dimensions that unfold as we meditate. In his book, “Master Guide to Meditation”, he states that,

“These guidelines are emphasized in the major religious and philosophical writings of many cultures.
These are six stages through which we unfold during meditation practice, which may be experiencing
sequentially or may be moved through almost instantaneously: Settled meditation posture,
harmonizing of the body’s life forces, internalization of attention, concentration, pure meditation, and the peak experience or realization. To facilitate meditation practice, these stages should be understood and knowledge of how to move through them should be acquired and applied.”

The growth of humans has no end in sight, it is limitless as we evolve to perfect our lower
qualities to higher, more perfected qualities that lead us to live in unity with divine consciousness as
creative expressions of that consciousness. We then can live more abundant, fulfilled, and joyous
life. At the same time, we can create peace on earth, enjoy better relationships within the community
and in our daily lives.

Breath: An Integral Part of Meditation

“The breath is a gateway into the present moment…” Larry Rosenberg, “Breath by Breath: The
Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation”

The first thing that we become aware of when we sit in silence is our breath. By the process of becoming aware of our breath, we can begin to awaken to our spirituality and divine consciousness.
One way in which the science of breath can be explained is by the ancient practice of Pranayama.
Pranayama is formed from two words. Prana means the breath, life force and ayama means to control. Together it creates the process of controlling the life force (breath) which is pranayama. This practice is said to revitalize the chi/vital life force and energies of the body, bringing health and wellness and awareness to the self.

The breath is an integral part of our physical body, in fact it is our life force, without which we would not be alive. Breath is the essence of your being. It is the force that brings one to life. It is also, an essential part of one is being, giving life and movement to every part, organ, and function in our bodies.

What is Breath

Breath consists of oxygen, a vital element that enables one to live and to be alive. The oxygen mixes with our blood and cells to give us life, which flows through our bloodstream. Our physical bodies are constantly changing, as we breathe in the new air every second of our life. The breath (air) also consists of nitrogen and carbon dioxide. We breathe these elements in, but they are mainly used in the exhalation process. Nitrogen helps in the making of proteins and amino acids, whereas carbon dioxide (CO_2) is breathed out. Oxygen is the pure air we breathe in carbon dioxide is the stale, harmful air we breathe out. Swami Saradananda states in his book, "The Power of Breath: Yoga Breathing for Inner Balance, Health and Harmony", that,

"Yoga philosophy teaches that your breath is the physical manifestation of the vital energy that gives you the ability to live and breathe, move about and function in the world. It is this life force that allows you to think, digest food, hear sounds, laugh, sneeze, and carry out the numerous activities you engage in at any moment, both conscious and unconsciously. This vital energy, which animates every being, is described in many eastern philosophies, and in India is known as Prana. Though not material in nature, prana flows through every part of your body, interpenetrating each cell like water filling a

sponge.”

The breath is a part of our every feeling, action, and thought. Whatever, we do our breath is a part of it. If we breathe the right way, we improve the way we think, feel, and react to situations and others. On the other hand, if we breathe improperly, we gradually begin to become stressed, which affects our emotions, thoughts, and actions, and eventually, this leads to mental and physical diseases.

The process of breathing includes breathing-in (Inhale) and breathing-out (Exhale). This process takes place in our body, in the place called the respiratory system. This system includes us lungs in the chest area, the throat, and the nose area. Everything between the nose and the lungs are the respiratory system. This system allows the breathing process to take place. We inhale through the nose, and the nasal passage allows the vital breath to flow down passing through the throat area, then down to the heart and lungs. By inhaling air, we bring oxygen to become a part of the respiratory system which then spreads to our bodies by the bloodstreams and subtle energy systems.

With every inhalation, an exhalation takes place, which brings out the stale, harmful breath out of the body. This process enables the physical body to manage its waste and rids the body of toxins and waste substances.

By concentrating on the breath, the prana, life force energy one can enhance the quality of their physical body and life. This can be done by performing breathing techniques one can begin to connect with breath (Prana), which gradually begins to connect with divine consciousness. Which in turn releases divine expression and creativity. The pure breath that emanates from your connection with the divine begins to animate your whole being. Breath in its balanced form becomes Prana, Chi, Ki, life force etc. The subtle energy force that gives life to every cell in your body.

Swami Saradananda states in his book, “The Power of Breath: Yoga Breathing for Inner Balance, Health and Harmony”, that,

“Prana flows through your body in subtle-energy channels called nadis. Approximately 72,000 criss-cross your body-you might like to think of them as roads on an energy highway system. The traffic on

the roads in your prana. When traffic flows freely the system works well, but if a nadi becomes blocked, the flow of prana to that region of the body is reduced or even cut off. Without the nourishment of vital energy, that part of the body may weaken or become sick. For your body to be vibrantly healthy, an unimpeded flow of prana is necessary. One way to encourage this is to practice breathing exercises."

To control the breath (prana) is to achieve a meditative state of being. This is usually done by developing and controlling the breath. Many systems of breath techniques have been created from different cultures and traditions, to create a perfect state of being. One such breathing exercise is Pranayama, which focuses on various breathing exercises to achieve connection with the higher self and divine consciousness.

The best meditation technique is usually achieved through controlling the breath. One can achieve a still mind, a relaxed body by controlling the breath which leads to the opening of your spiritual self and divine consciousness. Achieving a still mind is the hardest thing to do. But it can be done given time and practice. As we progress in our meditation practice our thoughts become clearer, our emotions become balanced, and the inner world becomes more at peace with itself, which eventually affects all our body's systems, and brings health and well-being to our physical self.
Roy Eugene Davis states in his book "A Master Guide to Meditation and Spiritual Growth," that,

"As meditation progresses, breathing becomes slower and more refined, and tranquil calm becomes the prevailing mental condition providing the meditator deeper conscious rest and renewal than usually occurs during ordinary sleep. The body's life forces become balanced, contributing to organized function of physical systems."

One can achieve a still mind, a relaxed body, and altered states of consciousness, by the development and control of breath. The breath process is where the key to meditation lies. The place between inhalation & exhalation is the place where one finds the peace to connect with God.

Meditation around the World

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Genesis 2:7

The practice of meditation can be found all over the world, in one form or another. The following are some common practices that have had a profound effect on defining what meditation is:

Tibetan Meditation

The Tibetans practice Buddhism to attain the advanced states of awareness. In them meditations mandala symbolism, visualizations, mind-cultivating exercises, reading and chanting of esoteric poetry to become one with the divine. They also advance their training through tantric meditation to gain siddhis' abilities. These abilities go beyond human nature that gives increased senses such as extrasensory perceptions, visions, telepathic abilities, clairvoyant, clairaudient, etc. Tibetan meditation follows the Mahaayana Buddhism which emphasizes the controlling of the mind. The Website http://info-buddhism.com/Tibetan_Buddhism-The_Union_of_Three-_Vehicles_Georgios_Hakias.html, in the article "Buddhist Mediation Traditions in Tibet: The Union of Three Vehicles" by Georgios T. Halkias states that,

"Mahayana, not unlike Southern Buddhism, attaches vital importance to disciplining one's mind, stressing both the cultivation of great compassion for all suffering sentient beings and the view of the inherent emptiness of all phenomena. The primary motivation of Mahayanist is devoting, without self-gain, their life to liberate all living beings from the bondage of Samsara, the mind's compulsive grasping at a supposed inherent self and an equally rigid external reality. The altruistic commitment takes the form of a series of vows as outlined in the Bodhicaryavatara (Engaging in the Bodhisattva's Way) …."

The initiate of Mahayana Buddhism works toward perfecting and purifying the mind, body , and soul. They work at perfecting their character by increasing their wisdom, by showing compassion for all beings, by doing good, by acceptance of all that is, by meditating and trying in life, and by realizing that everything is dependent on each other by connecting to the oneness of the

universe. By practicing these six perfections the initiate learns to become aware of the aspects of an awakened spiritual consciousness.

Chinese Meditation

"To blow out and breathe in slowly, to inhale and exhale, to puff out the old breaths and draw in the new, practicing bear-hanging and bird-stretching, longevity is the only concern. Guiding and pulling, cultivating and nourishing the body favored by those who wish to live ling. (Zhuangzi, Gua535)

The Chinese practice several types of meditation techniques. The most common are to sit in silence, meditate on the Tao to become enlightened and attain a divine state of consciousness. The Chinese Mystics initially followed a Buddhist way of life and by following their teachings they eventually adapted it, into their way. One such practice is Silent Illumination which focuses on becoming aware of the silence and the moment, which brings light to the being. The main concept of silent illumination is to silence the mind and let the divine consciousness guide you to lead a creative, more abundant, and joyful life.

Chinese meditation teaches one to concentrate and if you are unable to sit in meditation then moving meditation is recommended to achieve similar states, such as qigong and tai chi. The website www.spaceandmotion.com/health/chu-kung-gigong.htm states that, "The practice of this "moving meditation" will enhance the mind/body connection and allow one to have more of a connection with the internal body. Qigong and Tai Chi are exercises as well as meditations. You will move every muscle, joint, bone, and organ of the body but in a slow and methodical way. Breathing techniques will enhance your practice. The exercises specifically for the joints will help you maintain your flexibility and regain some of the lost flexibility. This is a very gentle program and therefore is perfect for rehabilitation. This moving meditation will not only help you to focus and concentrate, but also to build the feeling of peace and harmony."

Qigong and Tai Chi are moving meditations to heal the physical, mental and spiritual aspects of one are being. Qigong uses the subtle energy force in our bodies to meditate. The

rhythmic movements of qigong help release energy blockages, the qi (chi) energy is then free to move in its natural state. These movements eventually bring one to connect with divine consciousness so that we move and live with the higher consciousness.

Japanese Meditations

The Japanese practice meditation in the form of Zen or Zazen, which is meant to be seated in a relaxing position and emptying the mind of all thoughts and images and letting the pureness of divine consciousness pours into the empty mind. By this practice, one can attain inner calm, peace, and serenity. When our inner world is at peace, we can reflect divine consciousness into the outer world, which enables us to live a better more creative, and abundant.

Joseph Murphy says in his e-book "Believe in Yourself", that,

"...Your conscious and subconscious mind are projections of God; they are working tools. God is infinite wisdom, Boundless Love, Infinite Intelligence, Absolute Bliss, eternal Harmony, and Indescribable Beauty. All these and others are qualities and attributes of God. You are not cast adrift on the ocean of life deserted by the Creator of Life. This presence and power are within you. This knowledge or awareness of divinity within you is the greatest and most powerful contributing factor to success."

There are many different styles of Zen Meditation, which are taught and practiced in traditional schools. Zazen meditations, put focus on sitting comfortably with a good posture. Sometimes they sit in groups on cushions. Group meditation is usually practiced in temples or monasteries and includes both sitting meditations along with walking meditation. There are several sitting postures that help one to attain a meditative state, the most common is the lotus position, along with the Burmese position which is a cross-legged posture and another position common in Zen Meditation is the kneeling position on a cushion which is called a seiza.

Once position and seating posture is established the meditation process starts. This includes focusing on the breath to still the mind and to begin concentrating on one thing. Once this is achieved then a complicated symbol which is called a koan is given to

the meditator to focus on. A Koan is described in the dictionary from the website, www.dictionary.com as the following.
"A nonsensical or paradoxical question to a student for which an answer is demanded, the stress of meditation on the question often being illuminating." Or "(in Zen Buddhism) a problem or riddle that admits no logical solution." Or "Zen Paradox, 1976, from Japanese ko, "public" and "mate for thought" "

Koan is thus a symbol or riddle that wants us to go beyond our rational mind thinking. This
stimulates the reality beyond our everyday reality, it stimulates our mind to look towards achieving
nirvana, opening to divine consciousness. Some Zen Buddhism schools do not use Koans, instead they just sit and practice non-thinking which leads to stillness of mind and thus enlightenment.

Another important Zen Buddhism is Walking Mindfulness Meditation. Mindfulness
meditation is another great meditation style to incorporate into your daily life. Thich Nhat Hanh, a
Vietnamese Buddhist monk and Zen Masters popularized walking meditation as a form of mind
mindfulness meditation. It is like the meditation the Christian Monks used, as they performed
their daily tasks. While walking practice conscious breathing by counting your steps. Mindfulness
Meditation can be practiced with any activity, having one-pointed attention on walking, cooking, or
gardening. Staying fully present in whatever you do is the important aspect of this meditation practice. The goal of mindfulness meditation is to find joys in one's own life and to develop love and
compassion for all forms of life. Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that the kingdom of God is within us,
but we must be ready to welcome it.

Mindfulness is being aware of the moment you are in and the actions you are doing at that
moment. Larry Rosenberg states in his book, "Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight
Meditation",

"Mindfulness is often likened to a mirror; it simply reflects what is there. It is not a process of
thinking, it is pre-conceptual, before thought. One can be mindful of thought. There is all the
difference in the world between thinking and knowing that thought is happening, as thoughts chase
each other through the mind and the process is mirrored back to us. The only time that mindfulness
can happen is in the present moment; If you are thinking of the past, that is memory. It is possible to

be mindful of memory, of course, but such mindfulness is unbiased. It is not for or against anything,
just like a mirror, which does not judge what it reflects. Mindfulness has no goal other than the seeing itself. It doesn't try to add to what's happening or subtract from it, to improve it in any way."

Mindfulness has become an important part of healing our lives and mind, as a holistic healing and wellness concept. Many researchers of mindfulness are discovering that every part of our life can be improved and transformed through the practice of mindfulness.

Hindu Meditation

"To change the analogy, the mind is like a lake, and stones that are dropped into it (or winds) raise
waves. Those waves do not let us see who we are. (...) The waters must be calmed. If one remains
quiet, eventually the winds that ruffle the water will give up, and then one knows who one is God is
constantly within us, but the mind obscures that fact with agitated waves of worldly desires.
Meditation quiets those waves. (Bhagavad Gita V.28) Huston Smith, Foreword, The Bhagavad Gita,

The Hindus practice meditation through yoga, reciting mantras and through breathing
exercises called Pranayama. Meditation is a part of their religious and spiritual studies and various
meditation practices are mentioned in the ancients Vedas Scriptures and the Upanishads.

"Vedic teachings hold that since the universal divine self-dwells within the heart, the way to
experience and recognize divinity are to turn one's attention inward in a process of contemplative
meditation." William Mahoney, The Artful Universe: An Introduction to the Vedic Religious Imagination.

Dhyana is another ancient Indian practice for deep contemplation that leads to enlightenment and mergence with God Essence. Yet another way that the Hindus practice meditation is by Yoga. The practice of yoga means to unite our inner and outer to attain a divine state. Yoga is also a moving meditation and is performed in combination with physical postures and breathing techniques. This creates a state of focusing and concentration on each movement and pose leading to the awakening of the higher faculties and consciousness. The Creator of the Yoga System is Patanjali. This system is focused on silencing the mind and emotions and attaining nirvana. Yoga is based on eight branches that work towards uniting our spiritual (inner) and physical (outer) being. The following are the eight branches of

yoga that help one reach divine consciousness and attain a peaceful, relaxed psyche.

- *Yama-Is the branch that develops our social interaction with others in society, such as practicing do no harm, will not lie or steal, control of sexual lust. Perfecting our lower desires creates improved morals, values, and behaviors, thus peace and harmony in a society.*

- *Niyama-Is the branch that works on the development of the self by practicing compassion, devotion, contemplation on one's behavior, and staying in a state of cleanliness and purity of both mind and body.*

- *Asana-Means to practice physical poses that create a flexible, physical body with a peaceful mental state. These postures improve the flow of energy in our body creating a better physical condition with fewer diseases.*

- *Pranayama-Means to practice the science of controlling the breath and breathing process. When we breathe right with a good posture, we release energy blockages, which hinder our natural state. This in turn brings one to a calm, serene mind and thus body.*

- *Pratyahara- Is the branch of controlling the senses.*

- *Dharana-Is the aspect of yoga that brings focus and concentration on one object or thing to overcome the chatter of the mind.*

- *Dhyana-This branch of yoga is a continuation of Dharana in its developed form. When concentration is developed it leads to joining with the higher self & divine consciousness.*

- *Samadhi-is the final aspect of yoga that brings one to final enlightenment.*

Zoroastrian Meditation

The Zoroastrian similarly pray to God as the Muslims and somewhat to the Jews. They pray to praise God through their daily prayers, which are known as Gah. This is how they connect themselves to the divine consciousness. The prayers are said in poetic prose.

The spiritual side of meditation in Zoroastrianism is practiced through the concept of purifying the Aipi (the aura or energy field of the physical body). The website www.frashogard.com/an-introduction-to-zoroastrian-yoga-part-1/ states in the article "An Introduction to Zoroastrian Yoga-Part 1", that

"…the expanding of Dum was intricately linked to the state of the Aipi of a person. As we have seen earlier, a person's body is composed of nine-parts-three physical, three ultra-physical parts of the body-called Keherp, Ushtan, and Tevishi extend outside the physical core body by a few inches. These are also collectively called

the Aipi-the subtle atmosphere around an individual. The area of the Aipi extends from the physical body to the circular expanse covered when a person stands with his

arms on his hips. This Aipi, although invisible to us, can be very easily seen and read by advanced souls, including some Tibetan lamas who can effortlessly tell you how you have spent the last 24 hours. How is this possible? Khshnoom explains that each one of our innermost thoughts, words, and deeds are captured and remain as a record of our past deed."

Further in the same article, it states

"Meanwhile the imprint in our Aipi also gathers. Depending on our lifestyle, the Aipi can be heavily polluted with the imprints of our evil thoughts, words, and deeds, or can be radiant with our good thoughts, words, and deeds."

Therefore, spirituality and meditation are done to purify the Chakra system, thus the Aipi (Aura) to create beautiful, light energy thoughts which illuminate the body and lets' divine consciousness shine through.

Zoroastrians also use mantras, reciting holy words to attain a serene state of being. The Five prayers of the day give respite throughout the day to get some peace of mind from our daily struggles and problems.

Christian Meditation

"The proper atmosphere of meditation is one of tranquility and peace and balance. The mind should
be able to give itself to simple and peaceful reflection. Intellectual brilliance is never required. The
will should find itself directed toward the good and strengthened in its desire for union with God."
Thomas Merton, Spiritual Direction & Meditation.

In Christianity meditation is practiced in many ways and one common method is using the
rosary. They use repetitive 'Hail Mary's', the Lord's Prayer, and other holy words from scripture to
create a still mind. Along with repetitive chanting of holy words they use visualizations to attain inner
peace. The Rosary was considered a symbol of devotion and salvation throughout the Christian
history. This caused confraternities of the rosary to be formed starting in the mid-1400s and onwards. More so 100 years later a book called the "Meditations on the Rosary of the Glorious Virgin Mary" was put together by these confraternities to enhance the meditation process. Each bead would have a separate prayer or meditation associated with it, along with visualization of the images of Jesus and Mary and other devotional objects. All this would eventually lead to the reunion of our souls with God and the divine heavenly beings.

Another form of Christian meditation was developed by divine readings and teachings of the 5th -6th century Benedictine Monks, which took the form of Contemplative prayer. This form of prayer leads to removing negative and harmful thinking patterns from the self, which creates space for God Consciousness to reveal its presence within ourselves. Contemplative prayer is practiced by repeating a sacred word or divine verse from the bible or a prayer for a minimum of 15 minutes a day. The repetition of the sacred word, verse/phrase should be practiced with awareness and with devoted concentration. This meditation is like Hesychasm which is contemplation prayer also known as the prayer of Jesus.

To contemplate also means to cut oneself from their current situation. It is said that Saint John viewed meditation and to contemplate in silence as to become close to God. He called loving God like this is silent loving, which is to concentrate on loving God. The rosary is usually prayed in a special purified space, with objects and images from the Holy Scripture, the bible along with candles to create a sacred space of love and devotion to experience union with God.

Through prayer a deeper knowing of God emerges and leads to a more serene state of being, eventually creating a connection with divine consciousness. One common prayer that is used by Christian's is the Lord's Prayer. Each verse of the prayer is used to meditate upon to create space in our hearts and mind for God's will to shine through. This creates a divine relationship with God.

Jewish Meditation

The Jewish people practiced several forms of meditation as well, which include meditating on the Divine Names of God, Forms of Prayers, Visualization with prayers and they use the chanting of God's sacred names through their Shema Meditation. The Jews refer to meditation by seclusion and contemplation. They also practice seclusion to perform prayers and contemplation on divine names to experience, dveikus-which literally means cleaving to the divine, becoming one with God or close to God.

Another common meditative practice is the Kabbalah which is practiced in many different ways. The one that concerns this paper is the meditative Kabbalah. This form of the Kabbalah focuses on developing spirituality and the inner self.

The website www.inner.org/kabbalah/beginner/five-stages-historical-development.php,states that, "... Kabbalah represents the union of wisdom and prophecy in the collective Jewish soul; whenever we study Kabbalah, the inner wisdom of the Torah, we reveal this union." The article goes on to further explain that, Kabbalah makes the secret wisdom of the universal consciousness manifest in us. It is the divine consciousness that mirrors through our perfected self. The cosmic consciousness (divine consciousness) in the Kabbalah is revealed in five stages of wisdom. Each level is an unveiling of a concealed wisdom and corresponds to the refinement of the soul. When a certain refinement of the soul is reached, the next stage opens its way, gradually ascending to union with divine consciousness. Each level has its traditions and teachings and prayers along with a certain teacher or rabbi. Their teachings state that the Torah is unveiled for new teachings on each level. When one reaches the end of a level, the seeker begins to feel that the teachings of that level are a lie, that they do not apply to him/her anymore. This means this is the end of that stage/level of teachings. It is time to embrace a new set of teachings/guidance. Thus, the basic goal /purpose of the Kabbalah is the development and refinement of the soul to reveal divine consciousness within the self.

Native American Meditation

In the Native American meditation, there are many ways to achieve a state where one can awaken to the divine consciousness. One such technique is drumming. When a few people gather together and their spiritual person such as the shaman performs a ritual with the beats of the drum. Listening and focusing on the drumbeats the shaman enters a trancelike state where the pure consciousness opens. In this state, they can heal, find creative solutions to their problems and questions etc.

Another method that is common in the Native American tradition is concentrating and becoming aware of the pause between breaths. By holding the breath and concentrating on the pause one can achieve a deep spiritual state, where we become one with divine consciousness.
"*The first peace, which is the most important. Is that which comes within the souls of people. When they realize their relationship. Their oneness, with the universe and all its power. And when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells. Wakan-Tanka (the Great Spirit). And that this center is everywhere, it is within each of us. This is the real peace, and the others are but reflections of this. The second peace is that which is made between two individuals, and the third is that which is*

made between two nations. But above all you should understand that there can never be peace
between nations until there is known that true peace, which, as I have often said, is within the souls of me." -Black Elk, Oglala Sioux & Spiritual leader (1836-1950)

The Native Americans have connected with nature their environment, animals the earth etc.
By connecting to everything in their environment, they have come to see the interconnectedness of all life, animate and inanimate with the Great Spirit. Other rituals that the Native Americans use are
sweat lodges to purify themselves from unwanted negative energies, they also have vision quests to
connect to divine consciousness by solitary staying in the mountains and connecting with the energy
of the earth, mountains, and its serene surroundings.

Other similar cultures and traditions that live near nature such are the Africans and Australian aboriginals who have also been connecting with divine consciousness through their ritual and interaction with nature, plants, trees, the mountains, rivers, animals. Both the African and Australian tribes and cultures practice similar forms of spirituality to connect with divine consciousness.

Islamic Meditation

The Muslims practiced meditation through their five prayers a day and other special prayers.
Islamic Meditation comes in many forms such as prayers, reciting sacred names of God, and special
prayers. Prophet Muhammad is said to have practiced meditation by going into seclusion for hours.
He used to go to Mount Hira for Meditation.

The website www.techofheart.co/2007/10/prophet-muhammads-meditation.html states in the article 'Prophet Muhammad's Meditation', that,

"It is known from historical accounts that before his prophetic illumination. The last Divine
Messenger, Prophet Muhammad used to go to spiritual seclusions and extended retreats into Mount
Hira near Mecca. It is during one of such meditation retreats (in the holy month of Ramadan) in a
defining moment of extra-cosmic enlightenment. Divine revelations started to reveal to him. The well-preserved collection of such Divine revelations later came to be known as the Quran, which
means recitation because of the Prophet following the inspirations, used to recite it to others including his companions."

The deep meditations of Prophet Muhammad led him to become one with God, Divine

Consciousness and thus revelations from the divine were revealed. It is known that all holy prophets and messiahs practiced some form of meditation/prayer or contemplation in silence to attain higher wisdom and union with God (Divine Consciousness).

Prophet Muhammad is known to have traveled to Syria in his early years, where he met with Gnostics, and highly learned individuals who taught him different forms of meditations. The website www.techofheart.co/2007/10/prophet-muhammads-meditation.html states in the article, 'Prophet Muhammad Meditation',

"...the methods of Prophet Muhammad's meditation, it is very much plausible to think that since he was practicing this prior to his divine inspiration – he might have been introduced to the idea of meditation at some point of time earlier. It is known from the life of the holy prophet that he used to travel to Syria in his young age. At that time Syria and that part of the world was the center of devout monks, mystics, kabbalists, sabians, gnostics-vibrating with fusion of different traditions."

"An hour of contemplation is of more value than seventy years of worship." Prophet Muhammad

Some Islamic mystics follow a spiritual path by practicing stages of spiritual meditations, which are as follows.

- *Tasbih: Is a rosary or prayer beads that are used to recite the sacred names or sacred phrases of God repetitively to bring one's focus on one thing, thus connecting one to divine consciousness. The e-book "Islamic Meditation, Mastering the Art of Zikr", by Ihsan (Emil Torabi), www.IslamicMeditatio.com "With proper practice, Tasbih is one of the most powerful ways to enter a state of Divine Presence."*

- *Muraqaba: Is meditation that practices the art of silence by just relaxing and focusing on your breath. Let your thoughts be as they are, without attaching emotions and meaning to them overcome and transcends them.*

- *Taffakur: Is the practice of reflection and contemplation. To think with a positive attitude, which eliminates negative thoughts. By self-contemplation one can eliminate negativity caused by doubts, misunderstanding, and false belief systems.*

Further in the e-book "Islamic Meditation, Mastering the Art of Zikr", by Ihsan (Emil Torabi), www.IslamicMeditatio.com, it states that,

"Through this practice, one progressively transcends the self, the ego, and enters increasingly into a state of Divine Presence and peace. With Muraqaba, a higher state of consciousness begins to operate, one that is rooted in the heart rather than the mind. And with consistent practice, this deeper level of awareness beyond thinking, a state of consciousness based in knowing, begins to become the norm."

Other Islamic methods of meditations include the practice of Zikr. They also have a mystical sect
called Sufism. The Sufis practice life through spiritual development, through mystical meditative
techniques by meditating on moral stories, God's sacred names, and Zikr. Zikr Meditation is a form of
cosmic circular movements to bring about a blissful state.

Meditation Tools& Techniques

There are many ways to meditate, such as visualizations, chanting, mantras, music and the act and practice of simply praying with devotion and contemplation can bring one to inner peace and
tranquility. The following are an explanation of some meditation tools and techniques:

Visualization

Is the act of imagining. It is a tool of the mind to give direction to the mind and breath,
to visualize a goal into being. We can imagine positive solutions to our problems. Visualization is
used to change bad habits and belief systems that are hindering one from achieving their goal. Positive statements or affirmations along with mental imagery of changing a bad habit will assist to create positive change, by gradually adjusting the negative thinking pattern. Visualization is the process of creating an image of the thoughts you hold in your mind. So, you make an intention that I will run for 30 minutes today, you create a mental image first of yourself running with your full potential, with vigor and stamina. This will motivate you to run at your full potential because you saw yourself do, therefore you can do it.

Chanting

Is the process of repeatedly saying a word, prayer, affirmation, or phrase. By continuously
repeating a word or prayer calms the senses and silences the mind. Opening the way to experience
divine consciousness. The constant repetition creates a profound, powerful sound that is soothing to the soul and sense and at the same focusing on one word or prayer, repeatedly creates a focused concentration on one thing, stilling the mind of its constant chatter. The process of chanting is also called dhikr (zikr) in Sufi traditions, and mantra chanting in the Eastern / Asian traditions. The website,

Willtuttle.com/wpmed.htm states that, "Meditation and affirmative prayer are ancient keys to wisdom, joy, abundance, love and freedom."

Repetitive chanting of sacred words, or phrases-repetitive chants put focus on reciting one thing which helps to free the mind from excessive negative thought patterns and related emotions. It gives some time off from the constant mind chattering, achieving a mind stillness. A quiet mind is then able to connect with the divine consciousness.

Music

Listening to calming music can help in calming the mind, body, and soul to connecting with
divine consciousness. Music affects one's emotions and psyche and can be used to enhance the
meditative states of being. The website http://www.zliving.com/wellness/meditation/meditation-music-7-reasons-listen-1685/, In the article, "Meditation Music:7 reasons Why You Should Listen To It", by Z. Living Staff states that,

"Meditation music can be traced back to several ancient civilizations. In many indigenous cultures,
shamans used meditation music in their worship of their gods or to put their followers in a trance-like state or religious ecstasy. Shamans and healers also use chants and hymns to perform their healing and magic. Christians used meditation music, in the form of praise songs and worship songs, to uplift the spirit. Monks in the holy temple can always be heard singing or chanting soothing hymns that create a peaceful and holy atmosphere in their temple. In medieval times, every celebration and feast were always accompanied by vibrant music and song playing. Meditation music has been used in the early days in so many ways and forms that people once believed that music was a form of magic."

Using music when meditating can greatly help create an inner serene state and a positive mindset. Healing sounds and healing sound frequencies or music enhance the experience of a meditative state. The vibrational frequencies are embedded with the music which leads one to experience higher states of beings. This helps one to experience higher dimensions of reality and awareness and eventually connect with the divine consciousness.

Crystals

One can use crystals in their meditative practices to remove negativity to enhance the
meditation and to attain a calm, peaceful state. For example, to heal stress one can use amethyst
crystals sitting or lying in a circle of 6-7 crystals and holding one in the hand while visualizing the

color of the crystal lighting up and enveloping you for 10-20 minutes in silence. If practiced daily it
may able one to connect to divine consciousness and bring healing from that source to make you
whole and well once again.

Aromatherapy

Aromas can help create a peaceful and serene state to help get one in the mood of meditation. Incense sticks, sweet-smelling candles, and essentials oils are found in many such places that meditation is practiced. Essential oils can also help release negative thinking patterns, stress, and depressive states of being. It also promotes relaxation. The website *https://organicaromas.com/blogs/aromatherapy-and-essential-oils/using-essential-oils-during-meditation,*

"Essential oils can enhance the meditation experience, promote relaxation, and encourage
spiritual openness. By using essential oils during meditation, you can get the clarity and peace of
mind that we all need in these hectic times. You can use essential oils in two different ways during
meditation. The first is by diffusing the oil into the air using an essential oil diffuser to promote
aromatherapy inhalation. The second is to make a potent aromatherapy massage oil and massage all over the body before the meditation exercise, aromatherapy inhalation can help stimulate the senses,
promote relaxation and create an ambient space so you can really focus."

A good essential oil and aroma that is used in meditation is lavender and chamomile. This oil calms the senses and promotes a peaceful state of being.

Benefits of Meditation

Along with attaining spiritual growth, Meditation is beneficial in preventing and healing
many diseases and mental disorders, such as depression, attention deficit disorder (ADD), alcoholism,
heart disease, hypertension, insomnia, ulcers. These conditions all have their roots in stress,
depression, and anxiety. The negative thoughts associated with stress and anxiety creates imbalance in our natural energetic states, which eventually leads to distortion of our natural energy (Chi), resulting in diseases.

The benefits of meditation are numerous, the following are a few:

- *Rejuvenation*
- *Improved functionalities and senses*
- *Youthful Appearance and aging processes are slowed.*
- *Vitality is increased*

- *Blood Pressure is lowered*
- *Decrease in heart diseases*
- *Nervous system is regenerated and brought into balance, stress, anxiety and fears reduced.*
- *Asthma is decreased as breathing is regulated.*
- *Immune System becomes stronger able to resist diseases*
- *One becomes more intellectual, endowed with wisdom and knowledge.*
- *Intuition is heightened*
- *Thoughts and emotions are more refined due to being calm and at peace with Oneself.*

Through meditation, one can silence the mind which can help in eliminating negative thoughts and replacing them with positive ones to bring about transformation of the distortion of our natural energy (chi), and bring about a more creative, joyful state of being. After much research on the benefits of meditation and mindfulness, researchers have found that a mind that is not still, or aware of the present moment is not happy. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book, "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face, Stress, Pain, and Illness", that,

"A recent headline in Science, one of the most prestigious and high-impact scientific journals in the world, read: "A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind.", Here is the first paragraph of that paper: Unlike other animals, human beings spend a lot of time thinking about what is not going on around them, and contemplating events that happened in the past, might happen in the future, or will never happen at all. Indeed, "stimulus-independent thought" or "mind wandering" appears to be the brain's default mode of operation. Although this ability is a remarkable evolutionary achievement that allows people to learn, reason, and plan, it may have an emotional cost. Many philosophical and religious traditions teach that happiness is to be found by living in the moment, and practitioners are trained to resist mind wandering and "to be here now." These traditions suggest that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. Are they right? The Harvard researchers concluded, as the headline itself suggests, that indeed, those ancient traditions, which emphasize the power of the present moment and how to cultivate it, we're onto something."

Other mystics like Lawrence Le Shan talk about Meditation as a practice that needs to be done diligently and on a regular basis and that there is no end to the benefits that can be attained through meditation. In his book, "How to Meditate: A Guide to Self-Discovery", he states, that, "As in all serious matters-love, the appreciation of beauty, efficiency-there is no endpoint to the potential of human growth. We work - in meditation – as part of a process; we seek a goal knowing it is forever unattainable."

In a nutshell, the benefits of meditation are many and include both inner and outer benefits. By silencing the constant mind chatter and diffusing of high

emotional states. We can live in joy, inner peace, and satisfaction. One can make better life choices and be able to make rational decisions. The outer follows our inner state. If the inner is peaceful our negativity, doubts, stress etc. are diminished, thus preventing diseases and health problems along with emotional mental disorders. This allows us to experience a better life.

In recent times meditation has become a universal practice and the main purpose being self-transformation and to create peace within oneself and thus peace in the outer world. Human growth never stops. The possibilities are endless. To perfect our lower qualities to higher, perfected qualities that lead on to live a life in unity with divine consciousness and as expressions of that consciousness is the goal of meditation. We then can live a more abundant, fulfilled, and joyous life.

Discussion

The purpose of meditation is to connect with divine consciousness, God, or whatever you may choose to call it. The Spiritual Journey of meditation leads to human growth which is limitless as we evolve and grow towards perfection of the human condition. By attaining a calm, peaceful state, we can connect with our divine self and live with the unity of the cosmic consciousness. Our every action is a creative expression of God and we find satisfaction in whatever we do. Even in the most trying of circumstances, we make decisions and choices from the background of that peaceful state.

This way we can find more joy and abundance in our lives. Therefore, in meditation, we find our true self in connection with divine consciousness and with everything around us. Lawrence Le Shan states in his book, "How to Meditate: A Guide to Self-Discovery", that,

"We meditate to find, to recover, to come back to something of ourselves we once dimly and unknowingly had and have lost without knowing what it was or where or when we lost it."

We all want a better lifestyle, to live to our fullest potential and with creative expression, to find peace and satisfaction in whatever we do. This type of state is best described as being spiritually awakened. Meditation is a spiritual exercise to control the mind and psyche for gaining a serene state. By being calm and peaceful and confident and at the same time connected to everything we can develop our lower self to improved intelligence and functionalities. This enables one to make better life choices and solve everyday problems in a rational, more intellectual way.

The breathing process can be thought of as a science. The inhalation and exhalation can be experimented on by trying the many different breathing techniques known to humanity. The science of breath enables the controlling of breath which controls the thoughts and emotional patterns of the psyche attached to the breath. By practicing certain breathing techniques, one can release toxic thoughts and emotions and gain peace of mind.

Meditation is practiced around the world, in various forms and techniques, depending upon the culture/religion/spiritual path one takes. Through the process of meditation, we can transform us lives, health, and well-being. Each culture and religion have its way of connecting with God. Each follows a spiritual practice coming from their religion, culture, or tradition and each is right. Many pathways are leading to divine consciousness.

The Tibetans practice meditative states through their lifestyles, by prayer by practicing love and compassion for all living beings. The Chinese follow the path of silence and contemplation on the Tao and ying / yang symbol and concepts. They also have moving meditate which are known as Qigong and Tai Chi. This type of meditative practices is good for people who are unable to sit still and focus. Whereas the Japanese practice of zazen or Zen by emptying the mind of all thoughts and letting divine consciousness enter the empty mind. Christians meditate by the reciting of sacred words, phrases on the rosary. Common words are Hail Mary's and Phrases from the Lord's Prayer. Another practice in Christianity is contemplative prayer to remove negative thinking patterns. To contemplate in silence to come near God. Jewish Meditation includes meditating on Divine names of sacred prayers and God. They also practice reunion with God through seclusion and contemplation. Another common spiritual practice the Jews follow the Kabbalah, which has many stages and focuses on the development of the inner self. The Hindus use many different styles of meditation to reunite with divine consciousness. They practice by reciting Mantras, practicing Mudras and yoga along with pranayama exercises. The Zoroastrians practice meditation by poetic praying and praising God by adoration. Zoroaster Spirituality is associated with purifying the subtle bodies, the energy fields by right thoughts and actions. This expands our consciousness and connects us with God. Islamic Meditation follows similar styles as Zoroastrianism. The Muslims meditate to remember God through their daily five prayers. They further have meditation practices as seclusion and contemplation on reciting the sacred names of God in repetitive chants. This reciting of sacred names is performed on a Tasbih, which is a rosary or prayer beads and is considered a potent way to become connected with divine consciousness. Another way is by righteous acts and purifying the soul of its lower qualities. The Native Americans follow deep meditative practices such as dance rituals, vision quests, and Shamanic trances through smoke or herbs. As we see all such practices are performed to attain connection with God and attain a peaceful and harmonious state of being.

The process of meditation opens new doorways to our inner selves. Deep within us lies wisdom and knowledge in unlimited amounts. These are resources that need to be discovered in the form of wisdom and knowledge to overcome our limitations and problems. By becoming aware of who we are and connecting with divine consciousness we can see new potentials and insights?

to human growth.

The article http://chopra.com/articles/why-meditate, in its article, states that,

"New research is also showing that meditation restores the brain. A landmark study conducted by
Massachusetts General Hospital found that as little as eight weeks of meditation not only helped
people feel calmer but also produced changes in various areas of the brain, including growth in the
areas associated with memory, empathy, sense of self, and stress regulation."

Meditation and mindfulness are techniques used to heal many mental disorders such as stress, depression. It is considered medicine for the mind. By healing our mind and paying attention to our thoughts we can pass it down to our physical self thus we can live better lives. Vast amounts of research have been done on meditation and its effect on brain waves and how the different parts of the brain are affected. It was concluded by many researchers of this field that meditation had positive effects on reducing the parts of the brain that were associated with stress, depression, and various other mental and emotional disorders.

Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body
and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness", that, "...We get pulled out of ourselves and wind-up losing sight of what is most important. We are apt to get so caught up in the urgency of everything we must do, and so caught up in our heads and in what we think is important, that it is easy to fall into a state of chronic tension, anxiety, and perpetual distraction that continually drives our lives and easily becomes our default mode of operating, our autopilot. Our stress is further compounded when we are faced with a serious medical condition, chronic pain, or a chronic disease, whether our own or that of a loved one. Mindfulness is now more relevant than ever as an effective and dependable counterbalance to strengthen our health and well-being, and perhaps our very sanity."

Mindfulness Meditation is now being used in many medical facilities and clinics to heal
stress, and anxiety, and various other disorders and diseases. It has also been shown that our brain
reduces the area where stress and anxiety take place, which in turn makes room for more inner joy,
peace, and well-being.

There are many paths to enlightenment of divine consciousness. Meditation is the vehicle and we
can use many types of vehicles to make the journey, such as moving, walking, stillness, and
mindfulness meditation. Along with that, we can use various types of tools and techniques to enhance

the experience of meditation such as visualization, sounds, aromas, crystals along with the process of chanting of sacred words, phrases etc. Even the simple act of just praying in silence can bring peace to oneself.

Conclusion

“Embrace the universe within! Greatness always begins from in the inside! All you need is within
you! Find your heart and find your inner source of power! Here you will find your Truth. Here you
will transform both light and shadow and liberate your Divine truth for the universe to celebrate!”

Mercury Veritas/Michael Gamble
www.flowell.life

There are many ways to meditate. It can be done in simple stillness or movement like the
Sufi Mystics, or through the rhythmic beat of the Native Americans. Whatever, method you choose to
follow all have a similar goal. To connect with the universe around you and thus ultimately
connecting with God, Divine Consciousness.

Meditation helps to still the mind from all external and internal influences. It lets the mind focus on a single point creating an expanded sense of awareness. It brings one to this serene state thus opening the doors to the wisdom of inner knowing, This peace in ourselves project into our outer
world, into our daily life so we can create a better world around ourselves and live-in joy, peace, and
harmony.

The act of meditation has been practiced since ancient times. Connecting with God, Divinity,
the Cosmic Consciousness, has been the desire of almost every human. In antiquity, meditation was
practiced by a select group of people who followed a strict hermetic way of life. Gradually as we
moved forward and with the advancement of technology the wisdom of meditation moved towards the western part of the world and thus became widespread. The Practice and techniques of different
meditations were used to attain enlightenment and altered states of consciousness.

A vital aspect of meditation is breath, which is also an integral part of our being, it gives
every part of our being life. Every action, thought and feeling are embedded in breath. The science of
breath can be explained by the ancient eastern practice of Pranayama, which means controlling the
breath. By controlling the breath, which is the inhale and exhale process we can control our mind,

psyche, emotional and physical body. This can improve our health and well-being. If one can experience a still mind and a serene, peaceful state of being which brings one to gradually connect to divine consciousness.

Every culture, religion, and civilization have practice meditation in its many forms. The Tibetans practice meditative states through their lifestyles, by prayer by practicing love and compassion for all living beings. The Chinese follow many ways of which one is Silent Illumination, which is sitting in silence. Whereas the Japanese practice Zen by emptying the mind. The Hindus, Christians, Muslims, and Jews use common practices such as repetitive chanting by reciting the sacred names of God, holy words or phrases, and development of the character and refining of the soul to attain connection with God (divine consciousness). The Native Americans follow deep meditative practices such as dance rituals, vision quests, and shamanic trances through nature, animals, and sacred symbols.

There are many techniques and tools used to enhance the meditation process. Some of the common ways are through visualizations, chanting, reciting mantra, listening to vibrational energy frequency sound or remarkably simple meditation music. Even the simple act of praying with true intent and devotion can lead to peace, relaxation, and inner satisfaction which allows one to enter divine consciousness.

There are many outer and inner benefits that can be experienced by meditating on a regular basis. Many diseases can be prevented such as heart disease, depression, asthma, blood pressure, hypertension, ulcers, attention deficit disorders, and many more. Along with that meditation can also heal insomnia, low energy levels, aging, stress, anxiety and bring rejuvenation and vitality to your overall physical form. One can never go wrong with meditation.

Our experiences in life are transformed from the mundane to the extraordinary when we use meditation to enhance our lives and beings. By becoming aware of the ocean of silence within, we connect to the divinity within us, thus to the cosmic consciousness. This awareness transforms us

thoughts, and emotions to create our next moment into a more fulfilling and satisfying one, the quality of our life is then enhanced, along with better relationships with the people and world around us. Jon Kabat-Zinn says in his book, "Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness" that,

"...if we can sustain our awareness, it shapes the future and the quality of our lives and relationships, often in ways we simply cannot anticipate. The only way we have of influencing the future is to own the present, however, we find it. If we inhabit this moment with full awareness, the next moment will be vastly different because of our very presence in this one. Then we might find imaginative ways to fully live the life that is ours to live. Can we experience joy and? satisfaction as well as suffering? What about being more at home in our own skin within the maelstrom? What about tasting ease of well-being, even genuine happiness? This is what is at stake here. This is the gift of the present moment, held in awareness, non-judgmentally, with a little kindness."

Whether the end goal of Meditation is attaining Enlightenment, or we just meditate to heal our souls or find peace within, we awaken our spiritual consciousness and begin living in awareness, which enables one to transform their life to the way they want. Our awakened spirituality eventually brings us back to connecting with divine consciousness and we can live with improved functionalities, intelligence, and creative expression. The creative expression within brings us to make choices and decisions that lead to joy and abundance and an inner calm that comes with knowing ourselves and the universe we live in. Larry Rosenberg describes it best in his book "Breath by Breath: The Liberating Practice of Insight Meditation", States that,

"Finally, enlightenment is the experience of intimacy with the entire universe. There is no separation whatsoever. You disappear in the present moment. And because you do, you have never been more alive. A famous Tibetan master, Kalu Rinpoche, expressed this truth beautifully,

We live in illusion
And the appearance of things
There is a reality
We are that reality.
When you understand this
You see that you are nothing
And being nothing,
You are everything.
That is all."

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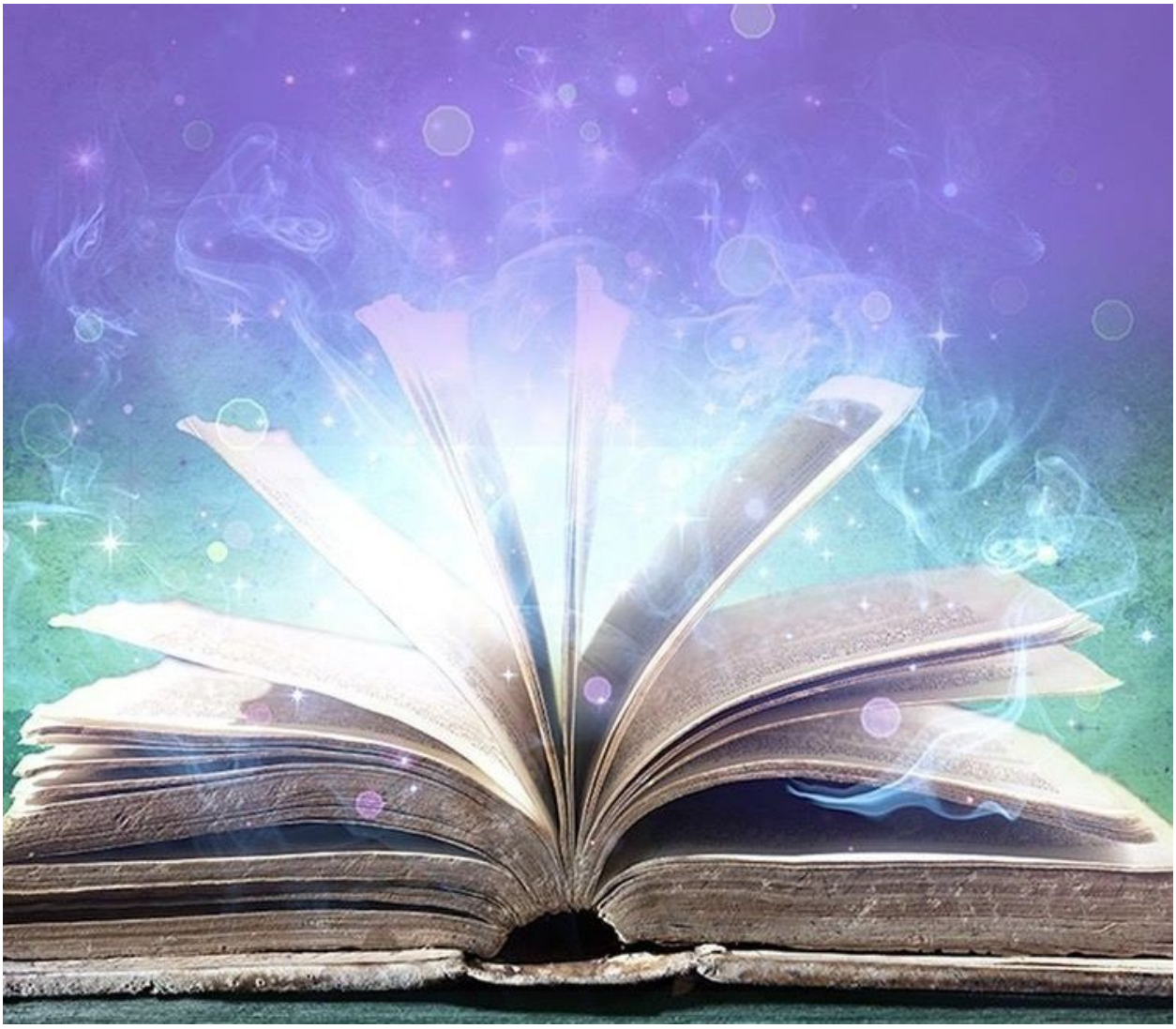

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Syrah Mary institute of metaphysics

By the authority vested in us by Syrah Mary institute of metaphysics
We do bestow the degree of

Bachelor of Metaphysical Sciences

Publicly and solemnly

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Who has attained and merited these present letters by completing all assignments and educational requirements with proficiency and excellence

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Institute on

and affix the seal
of the

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Shahir A Aslam, Ph.D. vice-president